

Motivations, Behaviours and Views of **Bloggers** and **Blog** Readers:

ANALYSIS OF A SURVEY CONDUCTED BY



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MOTIVATIONS, BEHAVIOURS AND VIEWS OF BLOGGERS AND BLOG READERS

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INTRODUCTION

Jan M. Zając

An increasingly discussed topic in recent years, blogging still tends to provoke a basic question: why blog? Why do so many people spend their time writing on the Internet and often bring up personal issues on a public forum? The growing popularity of blogs calls for an explanation of what blogging is about and what functions it performs in the lives of blog authors and readers.

In general, blogs constitute one of the simplest, if not the simplest way for an individual to make an appearance on the Web, create something personal, self-present oneself and express their views. Importantly, through blogging one can fulfil crucial psychological and social needs: confiding, describing feelings and important events and sharing it with others, but also cultivating and establishing relationships or gaining popularity, audience and the audience's feedback (comments).

Until recently blogs were referred to as Internet diaries. Currently, it has been acknowledged that this term does not fully define the phenomenon. Blogs have been increasingly used in journalism, public relations, marketing or politics. Bloggers write to build their image, professional standing or authority on a topic. Also, hobby-related blogs often generate income through advertisement, although this has not been a widespread trend in Poland yet. One can also blog for the sake of blogging – just to have a good and captivating blog. Importantly enough, many blogs fulfil several functions and deal with several topics.

An analysis of blogging must include social context. Writing a blog is usually a social activity performed with an audience in mind. It is a means

of establishing new, and cultivating old, relationships. It is a bidirectional process, too. The effects of blogging – new readers, comments, links, meeting new people and discussing blogs outside the Internet – are additional impulses for authors and motivate them to continue writing.

Blogs have been gaining an increasing popularity. According to Jan Schmidt's estimates (2007) based on data from Technorati and Blogpulse sites available in June 2007, which is when we started our survey, there were 50-95 million blogs worldwide. An April 2007 report by Technorati (<http://technorati.com/weblog/2007/04/328.html>) showed that over 320 days the number of blogs had doubled. However, it is still difficult to explain what blogging really is about and formulate a clear definition that would entail more than a statement that blogs are all websites that are named so.

The most common definition of blog is that of a frequently updated Internet page whose content is displayed in reverse chronological order (e.g. Schmidt, 2007). However, it has to be noticed that this applies also to many other webpages that feature frequent information updates, like a press-release page on a company website. Researchers stress the interactivity of blogs and the possibility to post comments - but not all authors enable comments, nor are all blogs commented. It is also highlighted that blogs form a so-called blogosphere with other webpages by using hypertextual links in blog content, comments or blogroll (a list of recommended blogs and other sites, usually placed on a blog's home page) - but numerous blogs do not use links at all! And how should we deal with new forms of communication like Twitter? Are these blogs, microblogs or a completely new category? Do we actually have a chance to provide adequate definitions as new technologies and blogging customs emerge?

This survey was an attempt to understand the specifics of blogging and their authors' and audiences' behaviours. Since we explored a new and largely uncharted territory we consider it a reconnaissance, a preliminary research to find interesting regularities and interdependencies. Rather than attempting a description of Polish blogosphere and the frequency of phenomena occurring within it, we searched for relationships and correlations between different behaviours, opinions and motivations of blog authors and readers, and their socio-demographic characteristics. We have been able to confirm several assumptions but also found a substantial portion of ambiguous data. We hope that this analysis will constitute an important contribution to the ongoing discussion on blogging.



Our research has been one of the first Polish surveys conducted among blog authors and readers. Previously this subject was tackled from a psychological and sociological perspective by such authors as Maria Cywińska-Milonas [5], Marta Olcoń-Kubicka [10], Michał Parzuchowski [11], Justyna Hofmokl and Alek Tarkowski in cooperation with Kaye Trammell and Amanda Sapp [16], as well as Jan M. Zając and Kamil Rakocy [18]. Preparing the research and analysing its results we also used resources available worldwide, mostly articles by Susan Herring et al. [6, 7], Amanda Lenhart and Susannah Fox [9] and Jan Schmidt [12, 13].

The survey was conducted by Gemius SA research company and Blox.pl website. The data was then processed by a group of people and an analysis was performed by a team of four. As the members of the team worked independently the text is more diversified and the reader can compare and judge different styles of analysis and result examination. Enjoy your reading!

MAJOR CONCLUSIONS

●● WRITING BLOGS

Blog authors are primarily young persons but more than 1/3 of bloggers are over 30. Most bloggers have a job (66%); half attend a school or university.

Bloggers are active Internet users: 92% browse for product, services or company information, 85% are forum or mailing list users, 76% shop online, and 66% attend online auctions.

Reasons of blogging are complex – only 12% provided one reason whereas as much as 2/3 gave three or more. The chief stimuli are personal motives and self-expression. Bloggers write mainly to express their personal impressions and emotions (65%) or opinions (64%) and preserve ideas, experiences and feelings (60%). An important aspect of blogging is its social functions: almost half of the surveyed reported they blogged to establish new relationships (28%) or cultivate old (27%, total 44%).

A factor analysis led us to establish five blog categories divided by content and reasons of blogging:

1. Personal blogs – written to preserve ideas, experiences and feelings and to express feelings. The content of these blogs is related to their authors' private lives.

2. Occupational blogs – written for occupational or scientific/educational reasons, dealing with occupationjn-related topics.

3. World-describing blogs – written to express opinions. These blogs deal with the latest regional, countrywide or worldwide issues, or with topics related to the author's interests.

4. Hobby blogs – related to interests and hobbies. These blogs feature creative content by their authors.

5. Relationship blogs – written to cultivate relationships with friends and acquaintances or to establish new contacts.

Advertisement and paid links are not common across blogs (6% of the surveyed authors use them) and generally can be found on the most popular sites. 1 out of 4 blogs whose readership exceeds 1000 contains ads.

Lack of blogging experience of a blogger does not have a negative impact on the number of readers and received comments. Authors of the most commented blogs tend to spend more time on blogging and update their blogs more often. The research has actually shown that the frequency of updates and time devoted to blogging have a positive correlation with the number of readers and comments.

Among the most popular bloggers males and older adults slightly prevail – half of authors of blogs with a 1000 and higher weekly readership are at least 30 years old.

Popular bloggers much more often tend to utilise various blog functionalities – those more widely used like blogroll, permalinks or enabling comments, as well as those less popular like uploading video or audio files.

●● READING BLOGS

Blogs are usually read “in bulk” – almost one-third of the surveyed (29%) reported they read at least a dozen blogs.

The major motivations of blog readers are: entertainment (“funny and nice content,” 76%) and “hobbies and interests” (66%). Other frequent reason is “curiosity about people I don't know in person” (59%). Additionally, 31% of the surveyed read blogs for scientific or educational reasons and 27% for occupational reasons.

In the rural areas there is a very high percentage of people either reading blogs extensively (at least 11) or not reading blogs at all. Middle and large city occupants are less polarised in this respect, the number of blogs read does not differ significantly across blog readers.

●● BLOGGING AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

Bloggers want their blogs commented. As many as 92% of the surveyed authors have enabled comments on their blogs.

Commenting sets up a feedback chain: a comment posted on a blog spurs another one on the poster's blog. Persons who receive more comments are more likely to post their comments in exchange.

60% of the surveyed bloggers use blogrolls and 55% use permalinks. There is a substantial percentage of bloggers utilising just one of these functions (20% blogroll only, 14% permalinks only). Blogroll is most commonly used by popular authors who devote at least 2 hours weekly to blogging, as well as by women.

As many as 3 in 4 surveyed bloggers check their visiting statistics.

Two-third of bloggers check who places links to their blogs. This is not related to the reported computer skills – the larger the readership the higher the tendency of a blogger to check links to their blog.

37% of the surveyed blog readers (including blog authors) met at least once in the real world somebody they know as a blog author, reader or comment poster. The more readers a blogger has the larger the chance to meet one in person.

The majority of bloggers (80%) report engaging in blog-related conversations outside the Internet. Moreover, half of them did it during the 7-day span preceding the survey. Bloggers who enter offline blog-related conversations report a larger number of cultivated relationships.

Also, socially active bloggers receive more blog comments on average. Bloggers with over 20 comments report a much larger group of friends and long-distance relationships than the others.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Arkadiusz Kuśtra
Jan M. Zając

The research was conducted between June and July 2007 on a sample of 1835 individuals. We contacted via the Internet only, respondents could participate in the project through Blox.pl and Jogger.pl websites, and the survey (created by the research team) was conducted by Gemius SA. Incidentally, the preliminary phase of the research was a discussion on Dominik Kaznowski's blog (<http://kaznowski.blox.pl>) and several suggestions posted there were implemented in the actual questionnaire.

Only persons no younger than 15 were admitted to the survey. In order to ensure the validity of data we employed standard verification procedures based mainly on logical coherence analysis and the assessment of the conduct of the surveyed.

The surveyed sample comprised of three groups of respondents: (1) bloggers who posted their last blog entry within a month before the research (called active authors); (2) bloggers who posted their last blog entry more than a month before the research (called inactive authors); and (3) individuals who took part in the survey through a generally available link (the so-called open survey). In the first stage invitations to participate in the survey were sent via e-mail to groups 1 and 2. In the second stage invitations were placed on main pages of Blox.pl and Jogger.pl, also a link was distributed across the blogosphere. This method was aimed at ensuring a diversified sample and providing a possibility to survey individuals of different blogosphere activity habits. The sample included blog authors as well as blog readers who did not write blogs. The majority of the surveyed (70%) ran their blogs at Blox.pl.

Due to the employed methodology of the research its results cannot be applied to all Polish bloggers or even to the population of Blox.pl and Jogger.pl users. Incidentally, a survey of that scope would be difficult to conduct over the Internet only.

Therefore we would like to stress again that the purpose of this research was not establishing a description of Polish blogosphere and the frequency of phenomena occurring within it but rather a search for relationships and correlations between different behaviours, opinions and motivations of blog authors and readers, and their socio-demographic characteristics.

WRITING BLOGS

Arkadiusz Kuśtra
Jan M. Zając

●●WHO BLOGS?

Among over 1500 bloggers surveyed there were substantial groups of people aged over 30, having an occupation, having a university grade and satisfied with their material status. Also, almost all were active Internet users utilising several of its functionalities.

Obviously, on account of the survey's methodology these results cannot apply to the group of Polish bloggers as a whole, or even to bloggers writing on Blox.pl. Obtaining this kind of results by means of an Internet survey would be very difficult or even impossible (e.g. see [3]). Moreover, factors listed in the previous paragraph are unique for Internet users against Polish society in general (e.g. see [2]). Nevertheless, bearing these limitations in mind we can say that bloggers are not merely teenagers or individuals "with extra time on their hands". To the contrary, hardworking professionals also run blogs. This is related to a change in the function of blogging: besides self-expression it is also the will to establish and cultivate relationships and to build one's image.

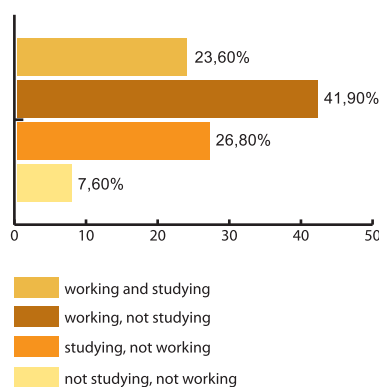
●Not only teenagers

The survey's actual socio-demographic profile substantially differed from the one we had expected. As many as 2/3 of the surveyed bloggers have an occupation. In the group of active authors (those who posted a blog entry within a month before the survey) the percentage of persons having a job amounts to 71%. Exactly half of the surveyed bloggers attend a middle or high school. Many of the surveyed both study and work, which is the case with 25% of the bloggers. Only less than 8% do not work nor study.

Diagram 1.1.

Occupation and education among bloggers.

Basis: Individuals running at least one blog, N=1573.



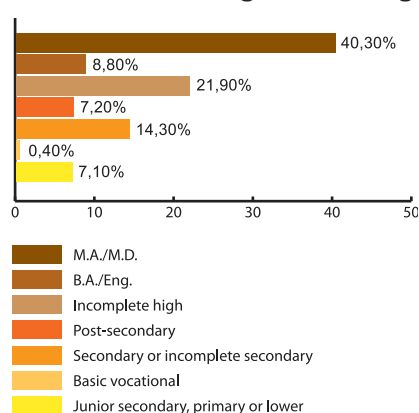
Blogs are written chiefly, but not exclusively, by young persons. Among the surveyed bloggers more than 1/3 are 30 and over, whereas individuals aged 15-19 are only 15%. The largest age group among the respondents are those in their 20's who comprise 52% of the bloggers. Let us remind here that due to ethical reasons only persons of at least 15 years of age were admitted to the survey. The majority of the surveyed bloggers are women (59%).

Bloggers are mainly inhabitants of large cities: more than half of the surveyed authors (55%) live in cities with populations over 200,000. Rural areas host merely 9% of the bloggers. It can be supposed that some of them live on the outskirts of large cities. 1/5 of the surveyed bloggers live in a town or a small city (up to 50,000 inhabitants).

Diagram 1.2.

Education level of bloggers.

Basis: Individuals running at least one blog, N=1573.



The surveyed bloggers form a very well educated group: 49% have a university grade (M.A. 40%, B.A. 9%), and 22% attend a university-level school. Among the active bloggers university graduates comprise as much as 59%. Almost no individuals with basic vocational education can be found among blog authors.

More than half of the bloggers (51%) report their material status as satisfactory or high. The most frequent jobs are "specialist/freelancer", "office/administration worker" and "higher official, manager or company owner" – total of 75% of the bloggers who have an occupation.

● Frequent and skilled Web users

Applying the same measure to all Web users is a big oversimplification. Cybnauts include „Sunday users" who go online at irregular intervals and to a limited extent, but also „heavy users" who are active and browse the Internet frequently. Our respondents are obviously the latter group. 97% of the surveyed bloggers use the Internet daily or almost daily, and 55% spend five or more hours online each day (on average).

The surveyed bloggers also share high computer competence. As many as 52% rate their computer skills as "very good" and 40% as "good". This is an interesting result - blogs, and tools offered by blog hosting services in particular, seem to be an easy means to make an appearance on the Web for people with low computer knowledge who would have a hard time creating a website on their own. However, such people form an insignificant part of the surveyed group.

Another indicator of Internet competence and frequency of use is the number of Internet functions and tools utilised. Again, the researched group is active in this respect. 97% read news on the Web, 93% use instant messaging clients, 92% browse for information on products, services or

companies, and 85% are forum or discussion group users. 76% of the bloggers shop online and 66% bid in Internet auctions. Almost 1/3 of the bloggers (29%) use online telecommunication (VoIP) and almost 2/3 (61%) watch movies and videos over the Internet.

The majority of all who decided to take part in the survey are heavy Internet users which is regularity with researches conducted over the Web. However, even such a specific sample shows differences – between those who run and who have never run a blog. Bloggers tend to rate their computer skills slightly higher (93% of "good" or "very good" ratings) than non-bloggers (86%). In addition, the former include a larger group of those who spend at least 5 hours daily on the Web (39% and 31%, respectively). There are no differences related to the use of Internet tools and functions.

● WHY DO THEY BLOG?

Blogging is underlain by complex reasons. Several authors deal with a variety of topics thus fulfilling a variety of needs, but there is a group of readers who prefer thematically consistent blogs. Despite emerging new functions of blogs the chief content is still related to the blogger and their personal matters. This is particularly frequent with teenagers whose blogs show clear differences in comparison with those of their elders. Results of other researches confirm the key role of personal functions in blogging [9, 13, and 17].

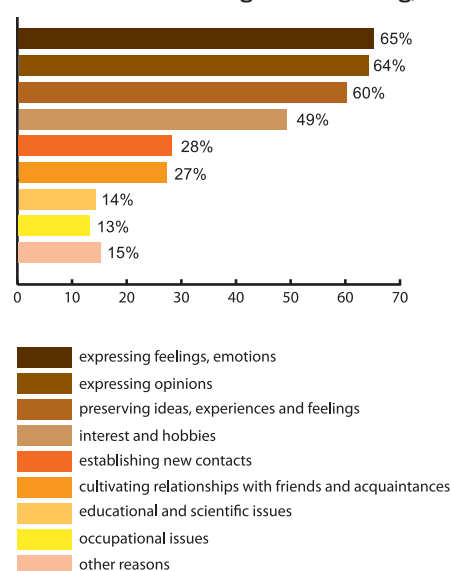
● Chiefly on myself but on other things too...

Complex as they are, the bloggers' motivations are chiefly personal. The surveyed authors reported mainly personal and self-expressive functions of blogging. Thus, the reasons of writing a blog are predominantly expressing one's feelings and emotions (65%) or opinions (64%) and preserving ideas, experiences and feelings (60%). Still, there is a substantial group motivated by other reasons (see Diagram 1.3). An important aspect of blogging is the possibility to share one's personal impressions with others. Almost half of the surveyed authors maintain a blog in order to establish new contacts (28%) or cultivate relationships with friends and acquaintances (27%, total 44%). A similar portion of the bloggers are motivated by hobbies or interests. Also, a small but noticeable part comprises bloggers who write on scientific/educational or occupation-related topics.

Diagram 1.3.

Choose reasons why you maintain a blog.

Basis: Individuals running at least one blog, N=1573.

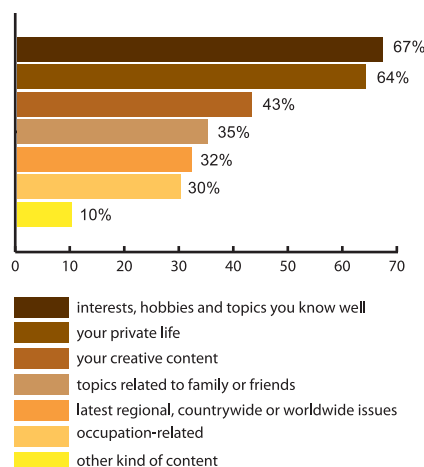


Blog content is of equal importance to blogging reasons. As shown in Diagram 1.4, the most frequent topics are related to private life - expressing feelings and opinions and preserving ideas, experiences and feelings. Approximately half of the bloggers write on their hobbies and interests. Many deal with several other topics.

Diagram 1.4.

What kind of content does your blog contain?

Basis: Individuals running at least one blog, N=1573.

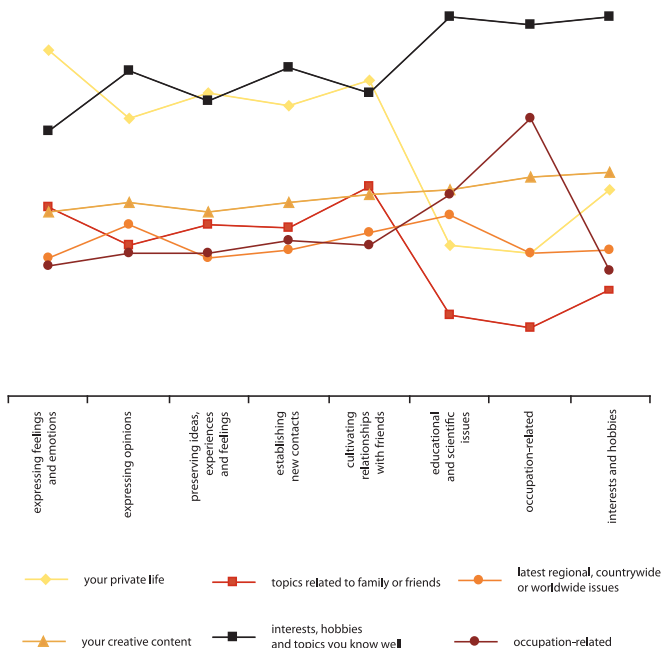


There can be seen very interesting correlations between blog topics and blogging motivations. Diagram 1.5 shows what percentage of the respondents motivated by a particular reason (horizontal axis) write on a particular topic (vertical axis). It can be noticed that reasons of blogging only to some extent determine blog content and even occupation-related blogs feature entries that express feelings and emotions.

Diagram 1.5.

Blog content and reasons of blogging.

Basis: Individuals running at least one blog, N=1573.



Online *silva rerum*?

Authors of publications on blogs often attempt to devise a blog typology (e.g. see [7, 12]). However, this is a difficult task due to the heterogeneity of blogs. This can be clearly seen in the results of our research: blogging motivations and content tend to be complex in the case of many bloggers. As shown in Tables 1.1 and 1.2 a substantial group of the respondents reported more than one motivation or type of content. Also, it is often difficult to assign a clear category to a blog and its author's motivation. For instance, only 21% of the bloggers chose one type of content whereas 51% chose three or more. As far as motivations are concerned, the gap is even wider: only 12% gave one reason of blogging and 2/3 gave three or more.

Table 1.1.

Number of reported reasons of blogging (without "other reasons", max = 8).

Basis: Individuals running at least one blog, N=1573.

Number of reasons	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
% of bloggers	1%	12%	19%	28%	20%	12%	5%	1%	1%

Table 1.2.

Number of reported types of content (without "other kind of content", max = 6).

Basis: Individuals running at least one blog, N=1573.

Number of types of content	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
% of bloggers	1%	21%	27%	24%	16%	7%	4%

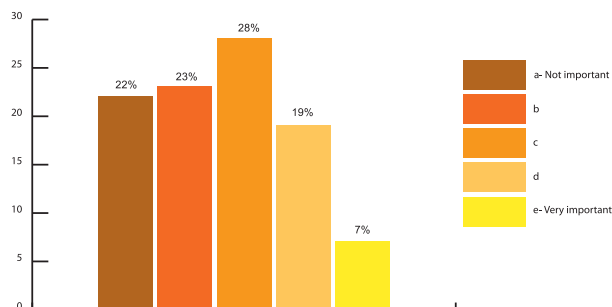
This kind of heterogeneity across blogs renders it difficult to devise a clear classification. Alek Tarkowski [16] compared blogs to *silva rerum*in, (or forest of thingsin), an Old Polish genre that combined personal notes with literary and chronicle content. Numerous blogs serve a similar role nowadays. Still, single-topic blogs exist, too, and it seems that their authors may be the ones who benefit most from advertisement deals [8].

Importantly enough, heterogeneous blogs are not a universal favourite. As shown in Diagram 1.6 opinions in this respect are diverse but a substantial part of the blog readers appreciate homogeneous blogs. Interestingly, the relation between the reported types of posted content and the reported preference of homogeneous blogs is not straightforward. One might assume that the more types of content the blogger posts the less they find homogeneity important. (Pearson's $r = -0.21$; $N = 1573$; $p < 0.01$). However, the correlation is low: even among bloggers who post four and more types of content there are individuals who declare that homogeneity matters.

Diagram 1.6.

Is blog homogeneity important to you?

Basis: Individuals running at least one blog, N=1743.



In an attempt to categorise blogs we performed explorational factor analysis of questions that related to motivations and content of blogging. (N=1573, principal components analysis, Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalisation, KMO=0,712, the solution explains 57% of the total variance). This method enables to identify key dimensions that differentiate observations. The analysis of the bloggers' feedback resulted in singling out five basic types of blogs divided by motivations and content of each. Importantly enough, these are independent types and any blog may belong to more than one category, similarly as in the case of blogging motivations and content described in previous paragraphs.

Thus, the main blog types are:

1. Personal blogs – written to preserve ideas, experiences and feelings and to express feelings. The content of these blogs is related to their authors' private lives.

2. Occupational blogs – written for occupational or scientific/educational reasons, dealing with occupation-related topics.

3. World-describing blogs – written to express opinions. These blogs deal with the latest regional, countrywide or worldwide issues, or with topics related to the author's interests.

4. Hobby blogs – related to interests and hobbies. These blogs feature creative content by their authors.

5. Relationship blogs – written to cultivate relationships with friends and acquaintances or to establish new contacts.

Table 1.3 shows the relation of motivations and content to a particular blog type. In general, The higher the loading, the higher the relevance of a particular statement to a particular type of blog.

Table 1.3.
Motivations' and content's relations to blog types
- Rotated factor matrix.

		Personal blogs	Occupational blogs	World- describing blogs	Hobby blogs	Relationship blogs
Motivations	Interests and hobbies	-0,41	0,16	0,22	0,62	0,13
	Occupational issues	-0,21	0,77	-0,06	0,08	0,07
	Scientific and educational issues	-0,18	0,64	0,10	0,22	-0,12
	Cultivating relationships with friends and acquaintances	0,09	-0,07	0,05	-0,04	0,81
	Establishing new contacts	0,06	0,12	0,02	0,17	0,67
	Preserving ideas, experiences and feelings	0,54	0,19	-0,06	0,31	0,01
	Expressing opinions	0,17	0,05	0,67	0,23	-0,01
	Expressing feelings and emotions	0,75	-0,17	0,10	0,02	-0,08
Content	Private life	0,76	-0,17	0,01	-0,11	0,11
	Topics related to family or friends and acquaintances	0,59	-0,02	0,08	-0,16	0,27
	Latest regional, countrywide or worldwide issues	0,00	0,05	0,80	-0,16	0,05
	Own creative content	0,11	-0,02	-0,03	0,67	0,03
	Interests, hobbies and topics known well	-0,19	0,18	0,49	0,48	0,17
	Occupation-related	0,25	0,68	0,23	-0,21	0,14

●●WHAT KIND OF BLOG?

Blogs are a highly heterogeneous form of communication yet their most important layer continues to be textual. Even such seemingly blog-typical features like links in blogrolls or entries are used only by some bloggers. Still less widespread are movies and podcasts, advertisement is also rare although a number of more popular authors generate ad-based income through their blogs.

●Blogroll

A typical blog feature, blogroll is a list of links placed by the author in the sidebar of their blog. Although blogroll is a blog-specific functionality many of the surveyed bloggers do not use this feature. This was reported by as many as 40% of the authors. Zając, Rakocy and Nowak [19] obtained similar results with an completely different research method.

●Permalinks

Another linkage feature used across the blogosphere are permalinks placed in blog text to redirect to a described site. Such links are used by 55% of the surveyed bloggers. These are mostly authors of occupational and world-describing blogs which may suggest that the blogosphere has developed a kind of quotation model. Permalinks are used by those bloggers who are popular, spend a significant amount of their time on blogging and frequently post entries. Please see "Blogging and social relations" for more details on blogroll and permalinks.

●Multimedia

Besides text, Internet diaries can contain audio (podcasts) and video content. However, podcasts seem to be rarely used by Polish bloggers as only 12% of the surveyed report using audio on their blogs. In comparison, movies are much more popular and are used by 27% of the bloggers. Featuring video on a blog has a positive correlation with the reported number of readers and comments. Adding audio or video to a blog is a very simple process now and undoubtedly renders blogs more attractive.

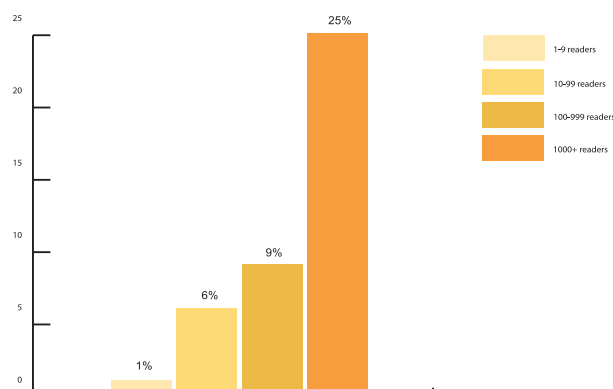
●Advertisement

When a blog draws a large group of readers it becomes a mini-journal and, just like a professional magazine, creates a possibility to generate income from advertising. This seems to be the case only with the most popular blogs, as confirmed by the results of our research. Only 6% of the surveyed place advertisement and paid links on their blogs. Also, featuring commercial content has a very strong correlation with the reported number of readers - as many as 25% of authors whose readership exceeds 1000 place advertisement on their blogs.

Diagram 1.7.

Percentage of bloggers using advertisement or paid links in relation to the reported readership.

Basis: Individuals running at least one blog and checking visiting statistics, N=1129.



Usually a blog is maintained by a single blogger but there are blogs written by more than one individual. We asked the bloggers how many authors their most important blogs have and the result is the overwhelming majority (92%) reported 1 whereas 4%, 1% and 3% reported 2, 3, 4 or more (respectively).

Far more common are bloggers running more than one blog. To be true, the majority of the surveyed (58%) reported running one blog but 25% run or co-run 2, 11% -3, and 6% -4 and more blogs.

●● YOUNG BLOGGERS, ADULT BLOGGERS

Until recently blogging was perceived predominantly as a teenagers' activity. Teenage years are a period of introspection, searching for an identity and attempts to define oneself. These are also common reasons of writing diaries. In this respect blogs are modern diaries and simultaneously a means of making an appearance on the Web and presenting one's creativity or impressions. However, blogging is not purely a teen-age phenomenon, adults blog as well. Thus, the question is whether developmental differences influence blogging patterns and what kind of distinct features can be found on blogs written by teenagers and adults.

In order to determine that we divided the surveyed bloggers into two groups: persons of 15-19 (a sample of 233; due to ethical reasons only individuals of at least 15 years of age were admitted to the survey) and persons of 20 and older (1340). As can be seen in Tables 1.4 and 1.5 motivations and content of adolescent blogs show substantial differences when compared with adult blogs. The teenagers tend to be motivated by the urge to express opinions and more than the adults like to feature their creative content on their blog. Their blogging is more often related to hobbies, interests or education, and establishing new contacts. The adults include a higher percentage of authors who use blog to cultivate relationships and write on matters related to their family, friends, acquaintances and, obviously enough, occupation. A similar survey conducted among German bloggers yielded corresponding results [13].

Table 1.4.

Reasons of blogging divided by age groups; * marks statistically significant differences at $p<0,05$; * marks statistically significant differences at $p<0,01$ (2 test).**

Basis: Individuals running at least one blog, N=1573.

Reasons of blogging	Under 19	20 and older
Educational and scientific	20%***	13%***
Expressing opinions	80%***	61%***
Interests and hobbies	67%***	46%***
Cultivating relationships with friends and acquaintances	21%*	29%*
Establishing new contacts	33%*	27%*
Preserving ideas, experiences and feelings	63%	59%
Expressing feelings and emotions	67%	65%
Occupation-related	10%	13%

Table 1.5.

Types of blog content divided by age groups;

*** marks statistically significant differences at $p<0,05$;**

***** marks statistically significant differences at $p<0,01$ (2 test).**

Basis: Individuals running at least one blog, N=1573.

Blog content	Under 19	20 and older
Interests, hobbies and topics you know well	79%***	65%***
Occupation-related	14%***	33%***
Your creative content	63%***	40%***
Topics related to family or friends and acquaintances	28%*	36%*
Your private life	62%	64%
Latest regional, countrywide or worldwide issues	32%	32%

Blogging motivation differences also stem from the fact that the teenagers on average chose more reasons of blogging (3,61 compared with 3,13 chosen by the adults). There are no differences as concerns the number of content types.

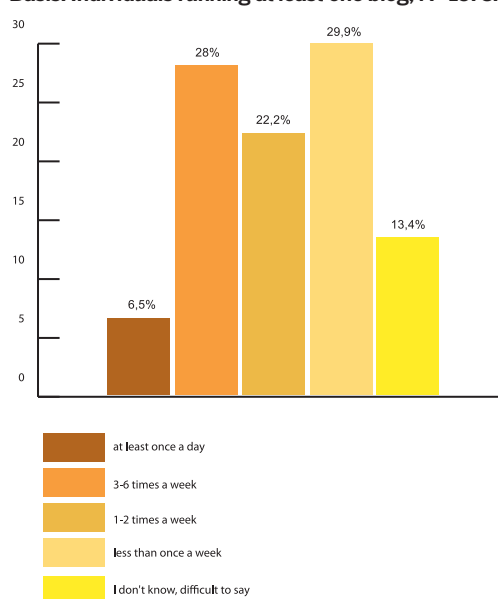
●● HOW OFTEN DO THEY BLOG?

57% of the surveyed bloggers post entries at least once a week, and 7% write at least one note daily. The most frequent posters are those bloggers who maintain blogs in order to establish new contacts (70% post at least once a week), and the least active are those writing to "preserve ideas, experiences and feelings", "express opinions", "express feelings and emotions" and present their "interests and hobbies" (58-59% post at least once a week).

Diagram 1.8.

How frequently do you update your blog?

Basis: Individuals running at least one blog, N=1573.

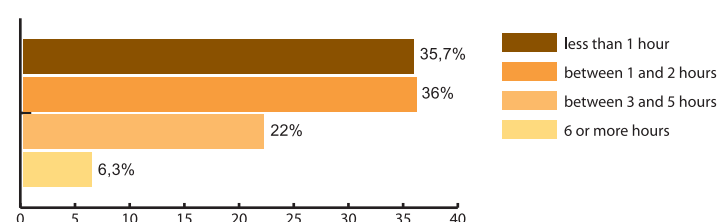


As regards the amount of time spent on writing a blog, clearly blogging is not the chief Internet activity of the bloggers. Since they spend long hours online (more than half browse the Internet for five or more hours a day), the time devoted to blogging is rather short: 72% of the surveyed report up to 2 hours of blogging a week. The most frequent bloggers are those who write to establish new contacts (40% blog for more than 2 hours a week) and those who are motivated by occupational reasons (39% blog for more than 2 hours a week). The least active bloggers are those whose motivations are "expressing feelings and emotions" and "preserving ideas, experiences and feelings".

Diagram 1.9.

How much time have you devoted to blogging over the last 7 days?

Basis: Individuals running at least one blog, N=1573.



The reported intensity of blogging activity influences the perception of various blog characteristics, as shown in Diagrams 1.10 and 1.11. Bloggers who post more often and devote more time to running a blog tend to appreciate frequent updates and the author's and readers' involvement in discussion. This may be partly a justification of one's own blogging patterns.

Diagram 1.10.

Reported intensity of blogging activity in relation to how the bloggers perceive the frequency of updates on other blogs.
Basis: Individuals running at least one blog, N=1573.

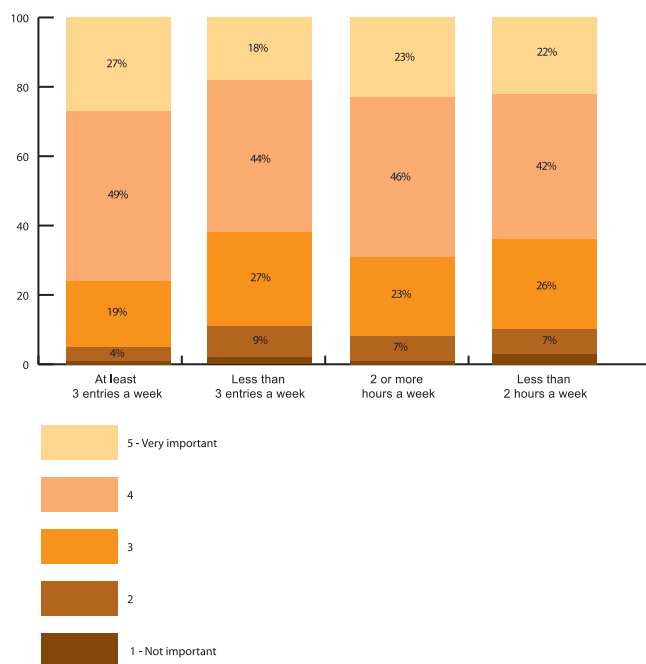
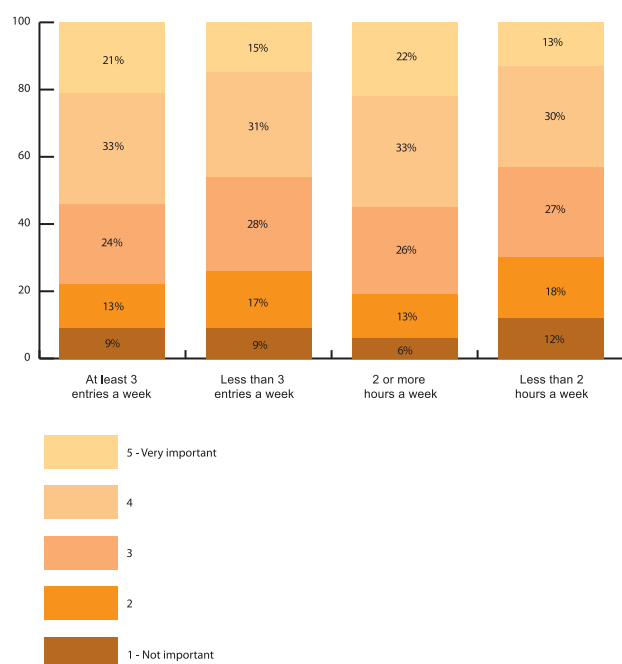


Diagram 1.11.

Reported intensity of blogging activity in relation to how the bloggers perceive other blog authors' and readers' involvement in discussion.
Basis: Individuals running at least one blog, N=1573.



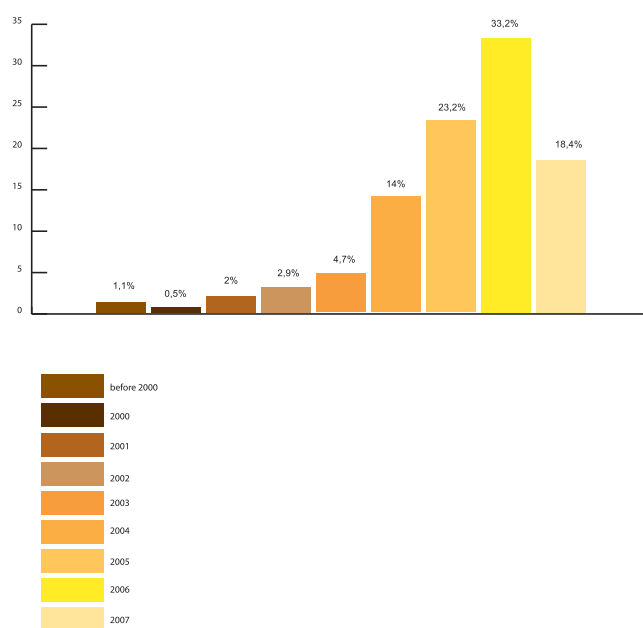
● HOW LONG HAVE THEY BEEN BLOGGING?

More than half of the surveyed started their first blog in 2006 or 2007 which shows that Polish blogosphere is still young. One in three of Polish bloggers has been blogging since 2006 and 18% since 2007. As the survey was conducted in July 2007 we can assume that the latter number has increased and Polish blogosphere is still undergoing a fast growth.

Diagram 1.12.

Which year did you start blogging?

Basis: Individuals running at least one blog, N=1573.



Due to the low number of bloggers who started before 2004, for analytical purposes we compiled years 2000-2003 into one group called "2003 and before". Similarly, we used categories 2004-2005 and 2006-2007.

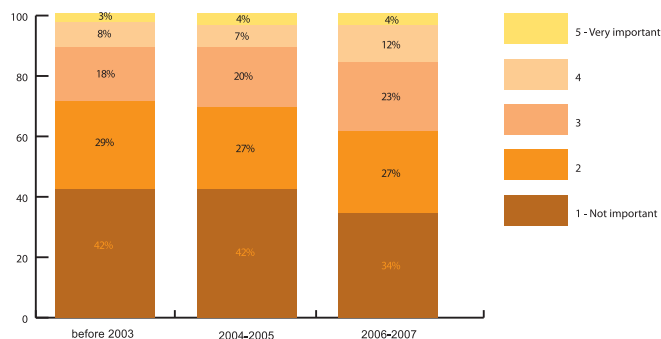
● Blogging record in relation to blog popularity

Lack of blogging experience of a blogger does not have a negative influence on their readership number – at least as reported by authors who check their blogs' visiting statistics. Moreover, the shorter the blogging record, the lower the probability of low visiting statistics (1 to 9 readers). In addition, as shown in Diagram 1.13 persons blogging for 1-2 years tend to think that a blog's popularity reflects its value – as opposed to long-time bloggers. Are then new bloggers more bent on achieving popularity? Perhaps more experienced bloggers have a personal approach to blogs whereas "nouveau bloggeriche" treat them rather instrumentally. While this is only a supposition it is certainly worth verifying in another survey.

Diagram 1.13.

Blogging record in relation to how the bloggers perceive blog popularity.

Basis: Individuals running at least one blog, N=1573.



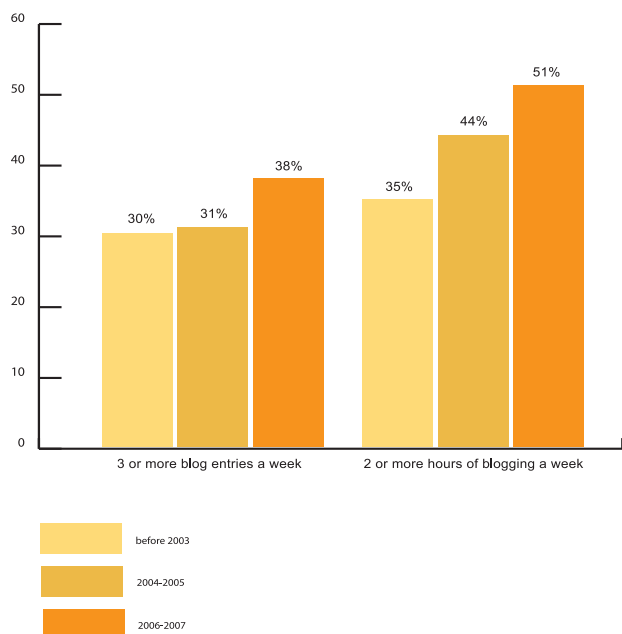
● Blogging record in relation to blogging frequency

Interestingly enough, short-time bloggers tend to post updates more often and spend more time on blogging than long-time bloggers (diagram 1.14).

Diagram 1.14.

Frequency of blog updates and time devoted to blogging in relation to the year of starting the first blog.

Basis: Individuals running at least one blog, N=1573.



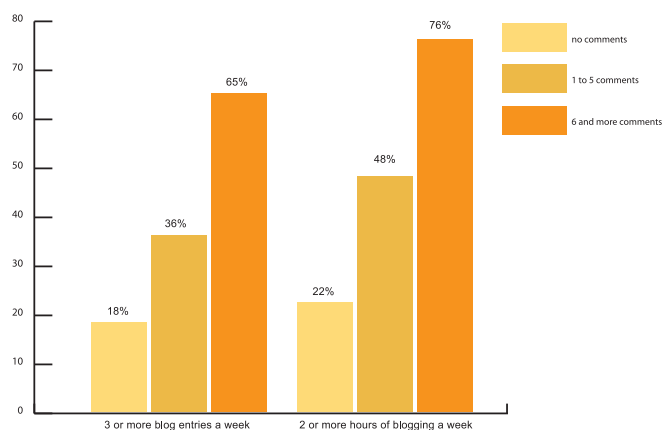
However, it cannot be assumed that blogging activity decreases as years of blogging record accumulate. This seems to be connected more with blog popularity. If we look only at bloggers with a readership of 100 or more any differences in blogging frequency between long-time and short-time bloggers disappear. Those blogging since 2003 or before post a similar number of updates and spend a similar amount of time on blogging as bloggers who started in 2006-2007. Moreover, differences in posting frequency between long- and short-time bloggers concern only those declaring less than 10 readers a week. Therefore, it appears that those who do not see the effects of blogging (a rise in readership) eventually lose some motivation and reduce their blogging effort.

This hypothesis is corroborated by an analysis of the reported number of comments received on a blog: blogging record is irrelevant here. As shown in Diagram 1.15 authors of frequently commented blogs devote more time to blogging and post entries more often. This interdependence is very strong. The process involved is surely a complex one: more blogging effort results in receiving comments which in turn motivate the author to keep blogging and also stimulate replies – which in turn means more time spent on blogging.

Diagram 1.15.

Frequency of blog updates and time devoted to blogging in relation to the reported number of comments received within the week before the survey.

Basis: Bloggers who enable comments on their blogs, N=1366.



● HOW TO GAIN POPULARITY?

Blog popularity is a very diversified phenomenon. Blogs with just a few readers coexist with those that are regularly read by dozens of thousands. Since most bloggers write with an audience in mind we can assume that many hope to gain a large readership. As the results of our survey show bloggers who have more readers tend to post entries more frequently and spend more time on blogging. Also, they use a variety of blog functionalities, like links to other blogs or websites, or video and audio content. The most popular blogs are maintained largely by male users, persons older than an average respondent (aged 30 or more) and persons satisfied with their material status. It seems that those bloggers who put more effort into running a blog usually have more readers. And consequently, a larger readership motivates bloggers to intensify their efforts, especially that it may translate into ad-generated income.

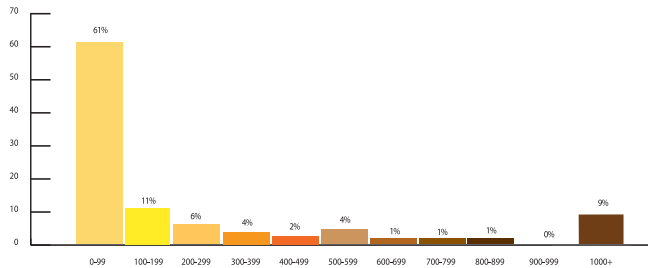
● Unequal blogosphere

In an attempt to assess blog popularity we enquired the bloggers about the number of readers within 7 days before the survey. Since as many as 3/4 of the surveyed reported checking their visiting statistics we decided to address only this particular group as a credible sample. The results demonstrated that blogs are highly diversified as far as readership is concerned. As shown in Diagram 1.16, some of the respondents have no more than a few readers while others boast a readership of thousands. This testifies to a highly skewed distribution of readers and in most cases is a consequence of an autocatalytic process. Popular blogs obtain top positions across rankings and in turn attract more readers, thus gaining even more popularity. Other blog researches conducted with the use of different methodologies tend to confirm these conclusions [14, 18].

Diagram 1.16.

Reported number of readership.

Basis: Individuals running at least one blog and checking blog-visiting statistics, N=1129.



Due to the highly diversified distribution, for the purpose of further analyses we divided the surveyed into 4 categories: 1-9; 10-99; 100-999, and 1000 or more readers.

● Popularity requires involvement

The results show that the frequency of updates and time devoted to blogging bear on the number of readership. Among bloggers who post entries less often than once a week only 26% have more than 100 readers a week. In comparison, among bloggers who update their blog at least once a day there is a 62% group with more than 100 readers a week.

Diagram 1.17.

Reported weekly readership in relation to the frequency of blog updates.

Basis: Individuals running at least one blog and checking blog-visiting statistics, N=1129.

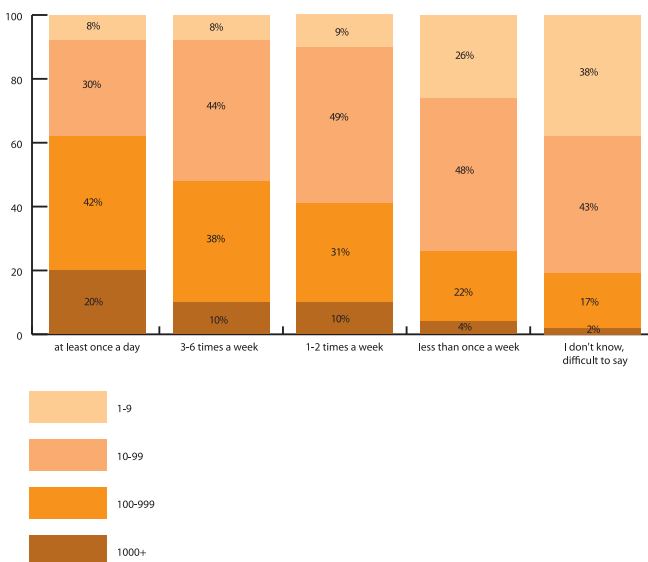
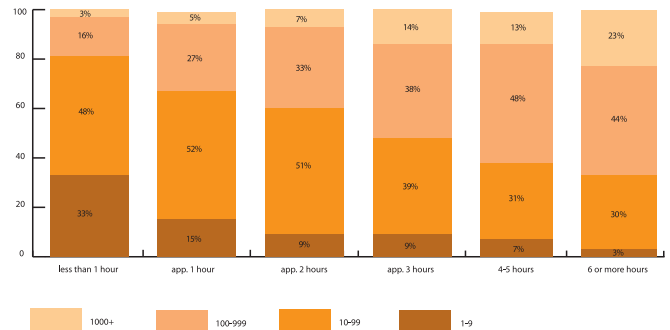


Diagram 1.18.

Reported weekly readership in relation to the time devoted to blogging.

Basis: Individuals running at least one blog and checking blog-visiting statistics, N=1129.



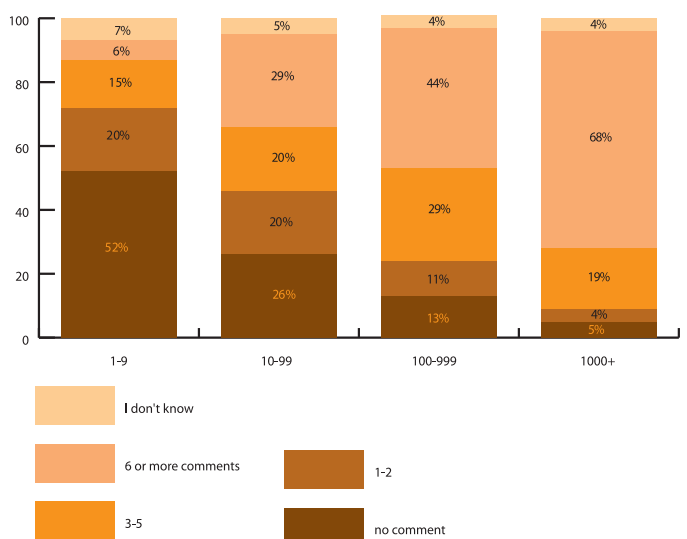
It can be supposed that this is a bidirectional relation. Those who put more effort into blogging attract more readers, and a larger readership stimulates and requires more effort, e.g. to deal with an increasing number of received comments. This finds its indirect proof in the analysis of the relation between blogging record and the intensity of blogging activity presented in previous chapters.

The number of readers is reflected in the number of received comments. Quite obviously, more popular blogs draw more comments. Thus, 52% of less visited blogs (1-9 readers a week) did not receive a single comment within the week before the survey and only 6% received 6 or more. Among blogs with a readership of at least 1000 a week only 5% did not receive comments and 68% received 6 or more. Again, a supposition can be made that this is a self-reinforcing process and a higher number of comments determines blog attractiveness and readership.

Diagram 1.19.

Number of comments received in the week before the survey in relation to the reported number of readers a week.

Basis: Individuals running at least one blog and checking blog-visiting statistics, N=1129.



Who gains more popularity?

Interestingly enough, there are substantial differences between less popular bloggers and those who report a large readership. First of all, the latter include slightly less women although female bloggers prevail in general (see Table 1.6). Secondly, more popular bloggers tend to be satisfied with their material status (diagram 1.19).

Table 1.6.

Gender in relation to popularity.

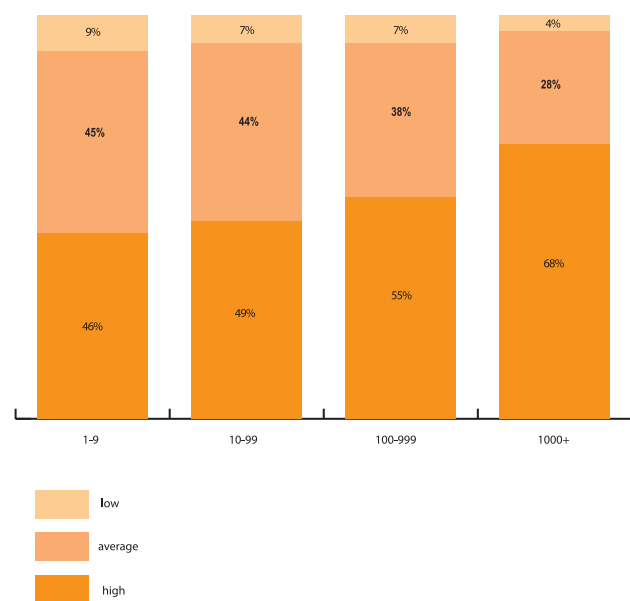
Basis: Individuals running at least one blog and checking blog-visiting statistics, N=1129.

Reported readership	1-9	10-99	100-999	1000 and more	Total
Women	66%	65%	48%	44%	58%
Men	34%	35%	52%	56%	42%

Diagram 1.20.

Reported material status in relation to the reported number of readers a week.

Basis: Individuals running at least one blog and checking blog-visiting statistics, N=1129.

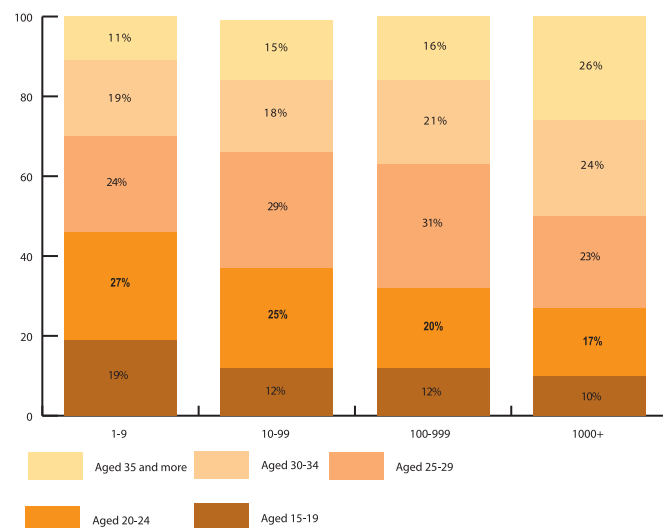


Worth noticing are interdependencies between the bloggers' age and their blogs' popularity. As shown in Diagram 1.21, the popular bloggers group includes less teenagers and significantly more persons aged 30 and older. The higher the popularity of a blog, the higher the age of the blogger.

Diagram 1.21.

Age of bloggers in relation to the reported blog popularity.

Basis: Individuals running at least one blog and checking blog-visiting statistics, N=1129.

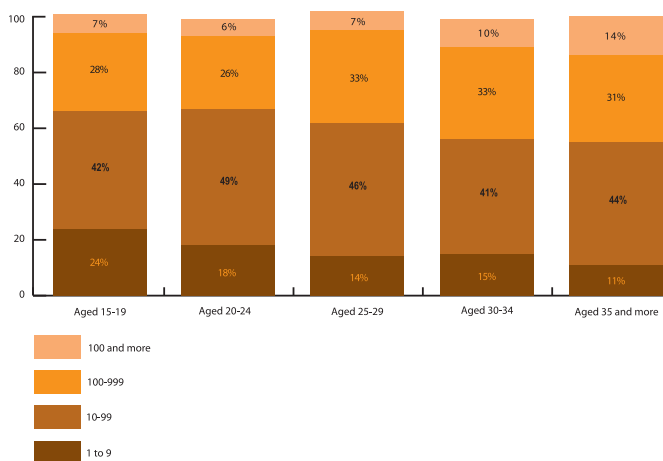


A similar albeit weaker connection can be observed when taking age as the basis of the analysis. As shown in Diagram 1.22 bloggers aged 30 and more include a larger group of popular bloggers.

Diagram 1.22.

Reported blog popularity in relation to age.

Basis: Individuals running at least one blog and checking blog-visiting statistics, N=1129.



Functionalities and popularity

The most read bloggers tend to use a variety of blog functionalities. Table 1.7 shows that these include both the general favourites (enabling comments, blogroll or permalinks) and the less common features like movies or audio files. Among bloggers with a readership of 100 and more there are virtually no individuals who use none of these features.

Unsurprisingly, advertisement and paid links are much more common across popular blogs. Although this research provides no grounds for clear conclusions regarding the direction of dependence, it seems that using these functionalities helps to attract readers. On the other hand, at least some bloggers experience a rise in readership as a stimulus to intensify efforts, e.g. upload video or audio files.

Table 1.7.

Employed blog functionalities - divided by blog popularity groups.
Basis: Individuals running at least one blog and checking blog-visiting statistics, N=1129.

Reported readership	1-9	10-99	100-999	1000 and more	Total
Enabling comments	89%	95%	97%	94%	95%
blogroll	48%	66%	72%	75%	66%
permalinks	39%	58%	71%	74%	60%
Movies, video files	13%	28%	40%	53%	31%
Audio files, podcasts	6%	11%	17%	25%	13%
Advertisement or paid links	1%	6%	9%	25%	8%
None of these functionalities	7%	2%	1%	1%	2%

READING BLOGS

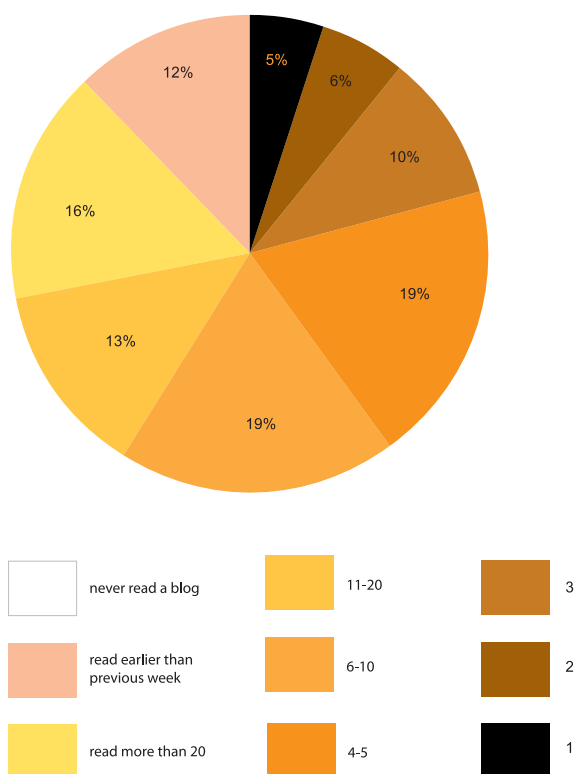
Piotr S. M. Janczewski

●● WHO READS BLOGS?

Blogs are usually read “in bulk” or not read at all – individuals who read just one are scarce. Only 21% of the respondents read up to 3 blogs. “Moderate readers” who comprise 38% of the surveyed visit regularly 4-10 blog sites. Finally, one-third (29%) reported reading at least a dozen blogs. A low number of individuals who do not read blogs at all is mainly a consequence of the choice of sample to survey.

Diagram 2.1.

Number of blogs read within the week before the survey.
Basis: all the surveyed, N=1835



Further analysis showed that women tend to belong to the “moderate readers” group (who regularly read 4-10 blogs) whereas men, daily Internet users and the open-survey respondents include a relatively larger group of heavy blog readers (more than 11 blogs read).

There can be seen an important, although low, correlation between the number of read blogs and gender, age, education and the frequency of Internet usage, whereas place of residence is irrelevant in this context.

Table 2.1.

Number of blogs read in relation to gender. Basis: all the surveyed, N=1835

Crosstab							
			Number of blogs read				Total
			0 blogs	1-3 blogs	4-10 blogs	11+ blogs	
GENDER	female	Number	148	217	450	265	1080
		% of GENDER	13,7%	20,1%	41,7%	24,5%	100,0%
	male	Number	86	161	244	264	755
		% of GENDER	11,4%	21,3%	32,3%	35,0%	100,0%
Total		Number	234	378	694	529	1835
		% of GENDER	12,8%	20,6%	37,8%	28,8%	100,0%

Symmetric measures				
		Value	Asymptotic standard error(a)	Approximate T(b)
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	,069	,022	3,166
	Spearman correlation	,075	,024	3,203
Interval by Interval	Pearson's r	,069	,023	2,957
N of valid cases		1835		
a. Not assuming the null hypothesis				
b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis				
c. Based on normal approximation				

As shown in the table below, a similar percentage of individuals who do not read blogs at all can be found in each of the 5 age groups (10,1%-14,4%). Focusing on blog readers only we can see that heavy blog readers (visiting regularly more than 11 blog sites) are most numerous among the young respondents, whereas the oldest group includes a relatively large number of individuals who read just one blog. Moderate readers (4-10 blogs) have the highest representation among the twenty-odd (app. 40%) and the lowest among the youngest. Hence, there is hardly a straightforward correlation between age and the number of blogs read. Nevertheless, it can be supposed that each reader group has a slightly different characteristics represented in a variety of factors – like age.

Table 2.2.

Number of blogs read in relation to age. Basis: all the surveyed, N=1835.

Crosstab							
			Number of blogs read				Total
			0 blogs	1-3 blogs	4-10 blogs	11+ blogs	
GENDER	15-19 years old	Number	40	47	95	96	278
		% of GENDER	14,4%	16,9%	34,2%	34,5%	100,0%
	20-24 years old	Number	44	88	178	127	437
		% of GENDER	10,1%	20,1%	40,7%	29,1%	100,0%
	25-29 years old	Number	61	100	194	138	493
		% of GENDER	12,4%	20,3%	39,4%	28,0%	100,0%
	30-34 years old	Number	48	76	121	94	339
		% of GENDER	14,2%	22,4%	35,7%	27,7%	100,0%
	35 years old and more	Number	41	67	106	74	288
		% of GENDER	14,2%	23,3%	36,8%	25,7%	100,0%
Total		Number	234	378	694	529	1835
		% of GENDER	12,8%	20,6%	37,8%	28,8%	100,0%

Symmetric measures					
		Value	Asymptotic standard error(a)	Approximate T (b)	Approximate significance
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	-,049	,020	-2,502	,012
	Spearman correlation	-,059	,024	-2,536	,011(c)
Interval by Interval	Pearson's r	-,056	,024	-2,401	,016(c)
N of valid cases		1835			
a Not assuming the null hypothesis					
b Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis					
c Based on normal approximation					

The conclusions resulting from the data provided above are slightly contradicted by the analysis of the frequency of Internet usage: individuals who do not read blogs at all are slightly less represented among daily Internet users than among irregular Internet users. Nevertheless, the difference (6,9%) is distinctly smaller than in the case of light and heavy blog readers' presence in both groups (10,1% and 8,9%, respectively). Consequently, it can be assumed that casual Internet users tend to ignore blogs and if they demonstrate any interest in blogging they usually read a single blog rather than a few, and still less likely a dozen.

Table 2.3.

Number of blogs read in relation to the frequency of Internet usage.
Basis: all the surveyed, N=1835.

Crosstab							
			Number of blogs read				Total
			0 blogs	1-3 blogs	4-10 blogs	11+ blogs	
INTERNET USAGE	Daily	Number	224	359	672	523	1778
		% of INTERNET USAGE	12,6%	20,2%	37,8%	29,4%	100,0%
	Irregular	Number	10	19	22	6	57
		% of INTERNET USAGE	17,5%	33,3%	38,6%	10,5%	100,0%
Total		Number	234	378	694	529	1835
		% of INTERNET USAGE	12,8%	20,6%	37,8%	28,8%	100,0%

Symmetric measures					
		Value	Asymptotic standard error(a)	Approximate T(b)	Approximate significance
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	-,072	,019	-3,468	,001
	Spearman correlation	-,078	,021	-3,353	,001(c)
Interval by Interval	Pearson's r	-,074	,022	-3,163	,002(c)
N of valid cases		1835			
a Not assuming the null hypothesis					
b Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis					
c Based on normal approximation					

As concerns education, the same pattern can be observed as in the case of age: individuals who do not read blogs are not characterised by any particular education level - each of the 3 education groups includes a similar percentage of blog abstainers (15,5%-13,9%). Heavy blog readers (reading at least 11 blogs) are strongly represented in the primary education group. Individuals who read a small or moderate selection of blogs (1-3 and 4-10, respectively) are most often secondary or high school graduates. The reason of this distribution may be an immense popularity of blogs among secondary and high school students. However, it may be speculated that the higher the education the higher the demands which in turn may result in a selective approach to blogs.

Table 2.4.

Number of blogs read in relation to education.

Basis: all the surveyed, N=1835.

Crosstab							
			Number of blogs read				Total
			0 blogs	1-3 blogs	4-10 blogs	11+ blogs	
EDUCATION	Primary	Number	19	24	45	49	137
		% of EDUCATION	13,9%	17,5%	32,8%	35,8%	100,0%
	Secondary	Number	100	149	302	250	801
		% of EDUCATION	12,5%	18,6%	37,7%	31,2%	100,0%
	High	Number	115	205	347	230	897
		% of EDUCATION	12,8%	22,9%	38,7%	25,6%	100,0%
Total		Number	234	378	694	529	1835
		% of EDUCATION	12,8%	20,6%	37,8%	28,8%	100,0%

Symmetric measures					
		Value	Asymptotic standard error(a)	Approximate T(b)	Approximate significance
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	-,057	,021	-2.683	,007
	Spearman correlation	-,063	,023	-2.701	,007(c)
Interval by Interval	Pearson's r	-,048	,024	-2.060	,040(c)
N of valid cases		1835			
a Not assuming the null hypothesis					
b Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis					
c Based on normal approximation					

The most interesting view at blog readership can be seen from the perspective of place of residence. As it turns out, the surveyed inhabitants of rural areas include as many heavy blog readers (at least 11 blogs) as individuals who ignore e-diaries. This may suggest an overall polarisation of countryside dwellers: one group ignores all Internet-related activities while the other one perceives the Web as the major window to the world - the more so as friends and acquaintances may form a much more dispersed network than within cities.

Inhabitants of small cities (with population less than 100,000) tend to be moderate blog readers, as proved by a relatively low representation of light and heavy blog readers (reading 1-3 blogs and at least 11 blogs, respectively) and a high percentage of individuals reading a few blogs. Middle and large city dwellers show no differences with regard to the number of blogs read.

Table 2.5.

Number of blogs read in relation to the place of residence.

Basis: all the surveyed, N=1835.

Crosstab							
			Number of blogs read				Total
			0 blogs	1-3 blogs	4-10 blogs	11+ blogs	
PLACE OF RESIDENCE	Rural areas	Number	27	33	53	60	173
		% of PLACE OF RESIDENCE	15,6%	19,1%	30,6%	34,7%	100,0%
	City of up to 100,000 inh.	Number	64	91	214	136	505
		% of PLACE OF RESIDENCE	12,7%	18,0%	42,4%	26,9%	100,0%
	City of 100,000- 500,000 inh.	Number	49	76	132	106	363
		% of PLACE OF RESIDENCE	13,5%	20,9%	36,4%	29,2%	100,0%
	City of more than 500,000 inh.	Number	94	178	295	227	794
		% of PLACE OF RESIDENCE	11,8%	22,4%	37,2%	28,6%	100,0%
Total		Number	234	378	694	529	1835
		% of PLACE OF RESIDENCE	12,8%	20,6%	37,8%	28,8%	100,0%

Symmetric measures					
		Value	Asymptotic standard error(a)	Approximate T(b)	Approximate significance
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	-,009	,020	-,453	,651
	Spearman correlation	-,011	,024	-,454	,650(c)
Interval by Interval	Pearson's r	-,006	,024	-,269	,788(d)
N of valid cases		1835			
a Not assuming the null hypothesis					
b Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis					
c Based on normal approximation					

●● WHY DO THEY READ BLOGS?

The most frequent reasons of reading blogs are centred around the selective consumption of content - related to entertainment (e.g. funny or nice content) or interests and hobbies. It seems that for these reasons blog popularity is largely irrelevant here.

Motivations connected with interpersonal relations were chosen second overall (interest in other people, staying in touch with peers, etc.).

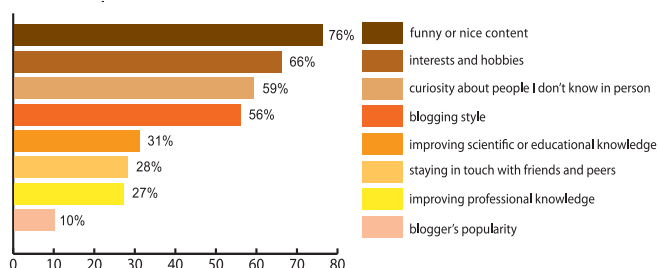
Incidentally, blogs do not constitute a valuable source of expert knowledge – few respondents declared improving professional or scientific/educational knowledge as their reason of reading blogs.

Wykres 2.2.

Choose reasons why you read blogs:

(tick-box list) % of respondents.

Basis: individuals who read a blog within the week before the survey (N=1601).j



Therefore, the key reasons of reading blogs are entertainment and leisure followed by social relations and in the last place - expert knowledge. In order to highlight the differences between the particular groups of respondents we aggregated motives of reading blogs into 3 categories, as shown below:

Entertainment and leisure

= [„funny content” + „interests, hobbies” + „style (...)”]/3.

Social relations

= [„interest (...)” + „popularity (...)” + „staying in touch (...)”]/3.

Expert knowledge

= [„improving professional knowledge” + „improving educational or scientific knowledge”]/2.

Table 2.6.

Results of analysis of variance: reasons of reading blogs in relation to the number of blogs read; * marks statistically significant differences at $p < 0,05$; *** marks statistically significant differences at $p < 0,01$ (univariate ANOVA).

Basis: Individuals reading at least one blog, N=1601.

		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F
Entertainment and leisure	Between groups	6,162	2	3,081	41,0***
	Within groups	120,076	1598	,075	
	Total	126,238	1600		
Social relations	Between groups	,712	2	,356	5,7***
	Within groups	100,593	1598	,063	
	Total	101,306	1600		
Expert knowledge	Between groups	11,205	2	5,603	41,3***
	Within groups	216,951	1598	,136	
	Total	228,156	1600		

The table shows substantial differences in the frequency of blog reading across all 3 categories of motivations. A post-hoc analysis with the use of the Least Significant Difference will help to establish a detailed list of differences.

Diagram 2.3.

The most frequent reasons of reading blogs (vertical axis) in relation to the number of blogs read (horizontal axis).

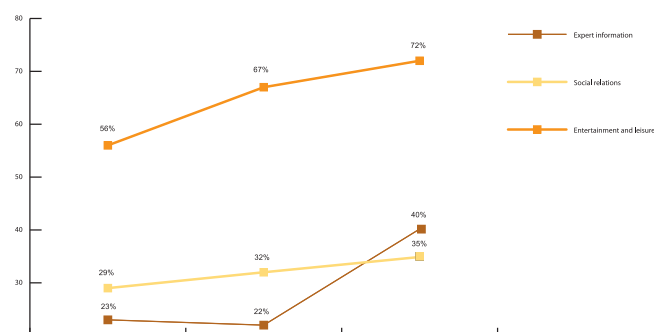


Tabela 2.7.

Reasons of reading blogs in relation to the number of blogs read;

* marks statistically significant differences at $p < 0,05$;

*** marks statistically significant differences at $p < 0,01$

(univariate ANOVA).

	Number of blogs read		Mean difference (I-J)	Standard error
	(I)	(J)		
Entertainment and leisure	1-3	4-10	-,11207***	,01752
		11+	-,16593***	,01846
		4-10	,11207***	,01752
	4-10	11+	-,05386***	,01582
		1-3	,16593***	,01846
		4-10	,05386***	,01582
Social relations	1-3	4-10	-,02784	,01604
		11+	-,05644***	,01690
		4-10	,02784	,01604
	4-10	11+	-,02860(*)	,01448
		1-3	,05644***	,01690
		4-10	,02860(*)	,01448
Expert knowledge	1-3	4-10	,00273	,02355
		11+	-,17608***	,02482
		4-10	-,00273	,02355
	4-10	11+	-,17881***	,02127
		1-3	,17608***	,02482
		4-10	,17881***	,02127

We can draw a number of conclusions on the basis of the table and diagram above. First, knowledge-related motives acquire a substantial growth between the moderate and heavy readers groups. In a kind of reverse statement, casual blog readers either do not have any need of expert knowledge (related to hobbies, occupation or education) or - much more likely - do not intend, or know how, to search for this kind of content in the blogosphere. The more intensive blog-reading habits are, the more important entertainment-related content becomes. Motives connected with social relations are equally represented across all blog-reading groups. In sum, social relations seem to be a kind of basis of a blog's popularity build-up. The importance of the ludic aspect rises steadily with the number of blogs read, whereas the focus on the hobby- or knowledge-related content leaps dramatically once the barrier of 10 blogs is crossed.

BLOGGING AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

Jan M. Zając

Writing a blog is a social activity. Blog is an interactive diary, available for all Internet users to read and comment regardless of whether they know the author in person. Audience's reactions and feedback are valuable information to the blogger. Using a system of comments and hypertextual links to other blogs and websites authors and readers interact, discuss, criticise, praise and scold one another. Bloggers willingly use the available simple tools that enable checking visiting statistics, URL's of sites that feature links to their blog, etc. Discussions continue offline, too. Also, blogging is a way of establishing new contacts and cultivating relationships.

●● COMMENTS AND COMMENT POSTERS

Blog comments constitute one of the major manifestations of the social and interactive characteristics of the blogosphere. The most popular blogs may receive even several dozens or hundreds of comments to one entry, discussions are lively and often turn into fierce arguments.

Bloggers want their entries commented. As many as 92% of the surveyed authors enable comments on their blogs. However, as shown in Table 3.1 not all blogs draw comments. Approximately 25% of the surveyed received comments earlier than 7 days before the survey. This testifies to a certain periodic pattern of commenting, probably related to blog popularity and the number of entries.

Table 3.1.

Number of comments received to a blog within 7 days before the survey.

Basis: Bloggers enabling comments on their blogs, N=1452.

Number of comments	Never received comments	Received comments earlier than 7 days before survey	1	2	3	4-5	6-10	11-20	More than 20	I don't know, difficult to say
% of bloggers	3,0%	24,8%	7,5%	8,1%	8,8%	11,6%	11,5%	7,5%	11,3%	5,9%

Similar conclusions can be drawn on the basis of the number of posted comments as reported by blog readers (table 3.2). There is an equally small group who ticked "never" and a large group of those who chose "earlier

than 7 days." Moreover, a substantial percentage posted no more than a few comments.

Table 3.2.

The number of comments posted to a blog within 7 days before the survey.

Basis: Blog readers, N=1601.

Number of comments	Never posted comments	Posted comments earlier than 7 days before survey	1	2	3	4-5	6-10	11-20	More than 20
% of readers	6,0%	27,0%	14,6%	12,6%	10,4%	15,1%	9,1%	2,9%	2,4%

As demonstrated in the first part of our report, popular blogs tend to receive significantly more comments while blogging record of an author is irrelevant to the number of comments posted on their blog. Also, more commented bloggers devote more time to blogging and update their blogs more frequently.

● Comments generate more comments...

Very interesting conclusions can be drawn on the basis of an analysis of the number of comments received by a blogger in relation to the number of blogs they commented and the actual number of comments they posted. For the purpose of this analysis we grouped answers into three categories: 0 comments, 1-5 comments, and 6 and more comments. The results prove that bloggers who receive many comments tend to participate in discussions taking place on other blogs. Again, this is a complex process based on feedback. Comments by a blogger draw comments to their blog - and frequently commented bloggers tend to post comments on other blogs in exchange.

First, as shown in Table 3.3 the number of posted comments is closely connected with the number of commented blogs. Obviously, the analysis should concern only persons who commented at least 1 blog. Quite expectedly, the dependence is rather strong here (Kendall's tau = 0,61; $p < 0,001$).

Table 3.3.

Number of commented blogs in relation to the number of comments posted within 7 days before the survey.

Basis: Individuals currently commenting blogs, N=1489.

		Comments posted			Total
		0	1-5	6 and more	
Blogs commented	0	528	0	0	528
	1-5	0	573	195	768
	6 and more	0	0	193	193
Total		528	573	388	1489

Secondly, the more comments a blogger posts on other blogs, the more they can expect their blogs commented - although the dependence is rather weak here (Kendall's tau = 0,21; $p < 0,001$).

Table 3.4.

The number of comments posted on other blogs in relation to the number of comments received.

Basis: Bloggers currently commenting blogs, N=1356.

		Comments received			Total
		0	1-5	6 and more	
Comments posted	0	320	145	37	502
	1-5	110	291	108	509
	6 and more	24	85	262	371
Total		454	521	407	1356

Thirdly, as shown in Table 3.5 the number of received comments is connected with the number of blogs commented by a blogger. This dependence is also weak (Kendall's tau = 0,17; p<0,001).

Table 3.5.
Number of commented blogs in relation to the number of comments received within 7 days before the survey.
Basis: Bloggers currently commenting blogs, N=1356.

		Comments received			Total
		0	1-5	6 and more	
Blogs commented	0	236	116	31	383
	1-5	141	381	233	755
	6 and more	5	25	188	218
Total		382	522	452	1356

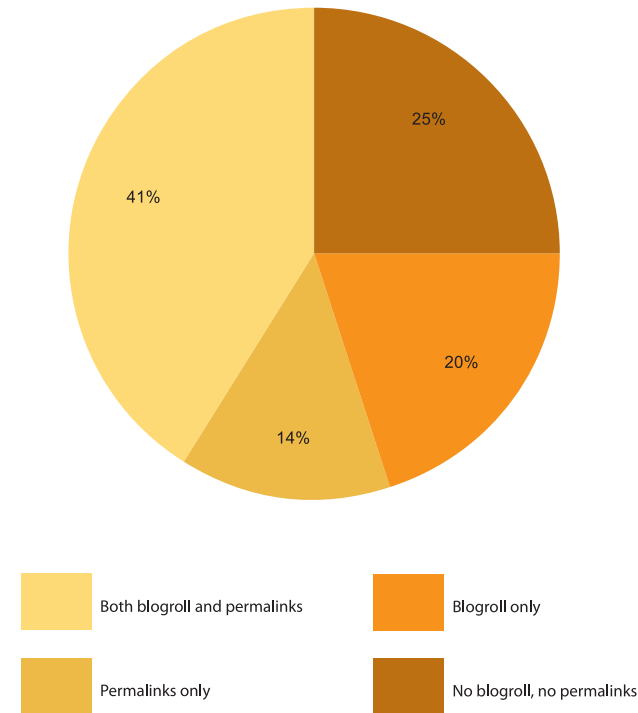
THE INTERLINKED BLOGOSPHERE

The structure of the blogosphere is largely reflected in the network of links placed on blogs to direct to other blogs and websites. Posting links is intended to draw attention to a different blog or recommend/quote a source. Also, it often reflects social relations whenever a link directs to a blog written by a friend or acquaintance, or any other person important in the life of the poster. As data concerning link structure is easily available blog and blogosphere researchers often refer to links in their analyses. However, linkage has several limitations mainly due to the number of relations involved and the fact that only some bloggers use links (this issue is investigated in more detail in [18]). This is confirmed by the results of our research which demonstrate that linkage concerns only part of the blogosphere and blogroll implies a variety of relations. Interestingly enough, links in the content of entries are more commonly used across non-personal blogs which is another proof of non-personal bloggers' efforts to follow basic rules of journalism.

Blogroll and permalinks

Two chief types of linkage to be found across the blogosphere are links placed in the content of entries (the so-called permalinks) and links featured in the so-called blogroll, i.e. a special list on the main page of a blog. The latter is slightly more popular with our surveyed sample: 60%, compared to 55% using permalinks. As shown in Diagram 3.1 there is a substantial percentage of bloggers who use only one of these functionalities. Incidentally, only some blog authors use links to other websites. The blogosphere is less interlinked than it seems and many blogs remain outside the linked network - which corresponds with the results of network analyses in Poland [19] and worldwide [6].

Diagram 3.1.
Use of blogroll and permalinks on blogs.
Basis: Individuals running at least one blog, N=1573.



With only 60% of the bloggers using blogroll we decided to find out the reasons of such distribution. For this purpose we used logistics analysis which is a method that enables to assess the influence of particular factors on occurrence or non-occurrence of a case (like using blogroll). As the results shown in Table 3.6 prove, blogroll tends to be featured by popular bloggers, by writers who devote at least 2 hours weekly to blogging, and by women. Irrelevant to blogroll are motives of blogging, type of posted content, age of blogger, blogging record, the frequency of updates and the number of received comments.

Tabela 3.6.
Factors influencing the use of blogroll – logistic regression model
(66% correctly classified, Nagelkerke's R² = 0,1, 2 = 96,802)
Basis: Individuals running at least one blog, N=1573.

Variables	B	S.E.	Wald	P	Exp(B)
Reported number of readers (category)	0,399	0,083	23,054	<0,001	1,490
Gender	-0,437	0,138	9,969	0,002	0,646
Hours devoted to blogging (weekly)	0,423	0,143	8,719	0,003	1,527

An analysis of who places links in blog entries brought further interesting results. Quoting sources and directing to other websites is an important aspect of blogging as it brings blogs closer to scientific and journalist publications. Most of the respondents appreciate blogs that feature links to quoted sources and information. At the same time only half of the surveyed bloggers use permalinks. Therefore, the question is what motivates bloggers to place links in blog entries?

As shown in Table 3.7, significant factors are the type of content and reasons of running a blog. Permalinks are more commonly used by persons who want to express opinions, blog for occupational or educational reasons, and post content related to their interests or latest news topics. Thus, linkage is used mostly on non-personal blogs whose character involves

referring to other sources. Also, links tend to be more popular with bloggers who write to “preserve ideas, experiences and opinions.” More permalink predictors are: larger readership, devoting at least 2 hours weekly to blogging, longer blogging record and, expectedly enough, appreciation of bloggers who provide links to sources.

Table 3.7.

Factors influencing the use of permalinks

- logistic regression model

(70% correctly classified, Nagelkerke's $R^2 = 0,24$, $2 = 238,822$)

Basis: Individuals running at least one blog, N=1573.

Variables	B	S.E.	Wald	P	Exp(B)
Reported number of readers (category)	0,317	0,086	13,508	<0,001	1,373
Reason: expressing opinions	0,474	0,146	10,498	0,001	1,606
Content: interests, hobbies and topics you know well	0,515	0,160	10,399	0,001	1,674
Hours devoted to blogging (weekly)	0,478	0,150	10,187	0,001	1,613
Appreciation of bloggers who provide links to sources	0,172	0,055	9,848	0,002	1,188
Blogging record	0,317	0,103	9,399	0,002	0,729
Content: latest regional, countrywide or worldwide issues	0,446	0,151	8,760	0,003	1,562
Reason: educational or scientific knowledge	0,614	0,233	6,942	0,008	1,847
Reason: occupational issues	0,644	0,248	6,737	0,009	1,905
Reason: preserving ideas, experiences and feelings	0,304	0,138	4,855	0,028	1,356

● Blogroll - ambiguous recommendations

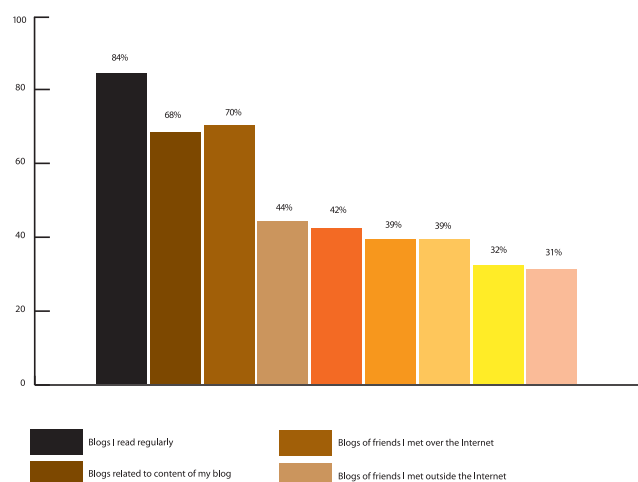
Putting links in a blogroll is a way of recommending other blogs.

However, the relations involved are ambiguous. The linked blogs may be indeed the blogger's favourites but also some long-forgotten blogsites that just linger in the blogroll. Some bloggers solve this problem by adding categories, e.g. to divide blogs into those frequently and rarely visited. Blogroll may also link chiefly to real-life or online friends'/acquaintances' sites, or only direct attention to a valued blog whose author the blogger has no relationship with. This is corroborated by the results of our survey shown in Diagram 3.2. A decided majority reported that their blogrolls feature links to regularly read blogs. Other categories have a more equal distribution.

Diagram 3.2.

Who is featured in your blogroll? % of answers.

Basis: Individuals using blogroll, N=950.



Individuals running more than 1 blog often use blogroll to link to other blogs of theirs. This is the case with 53% of persons running 2 blogs, 66% of persons running 3 blogs and as many as 76% of those who maintain 4 or more blogs.

● WRITING NOT ONLY FOR THEIR OWN SAKE...

Although we tend to see diaries as something personal they are often written with readers or even publication in mind. This is even more conspicuous in the case of blogs. The Internet makes it possible to reach a large number of people, including complete strangers. Simple tools enable checking visiting statistics (like the number of visits, time of visit, URL's of sites that feature links to your blog, etc.) and bloggers readily use these functionalities. They are popular because they fulfil the needs of bloggers.

Since as many as 3/4 of the bloggers check their blogs' visiting statistics they are surely not indifferent to the fact that other people read their texts. This tendency occurs across all the blogger groups regardless of the declared reason of blogging - even those who blog to preserve ideas and feelings like to know how many people read their notes (76% check visiting statistics). Interest in this data is fuelled by blogging motivations. Visiting statistics are most frequently tracked by bloggers who are motivated by: occupational reasons (82% check statistics), interests and hobbies (78%), and most of all the will to establish new contacts (85%).

Bloggers find the audience and their reactions very important, not only in the context of readership count. Two-third of the surveyed check who features links to their blogs, using special tools like TrackBack for this purpose. That authors should be vividly interested in who recommends their blogs comes as no surprise. Placing a link to a blog means that it drew attention, prevailing in the positive sense of the word. A number of links directing to a blog increases its chances to be found by other users - also indirectly through search engines. Thus, linking to a blog may be beneficial for its prestige and credibility.

Importantly enough, the tendency to check links to one's blog is related to the number of readers rather than declared computer skills. As shown in Table 3.8, bloggers with a larger readership are much more likely to track URL's of sites that feature links to their blogs.

Table 3.8.

Do you check who features links to your blog?

Basis: Individuals running at least one blog, N=1573.

Reported number of readers	1-9	10-99	100-999	1000 and more
% of those who check links	47%	68%	82%	92%

Another related factor is the interest in visiting statistics which proves that both tendencies involve the same mechanism - concern about other people's reactions. As many as 89% of those who track linkage analyse also visiting statistics.

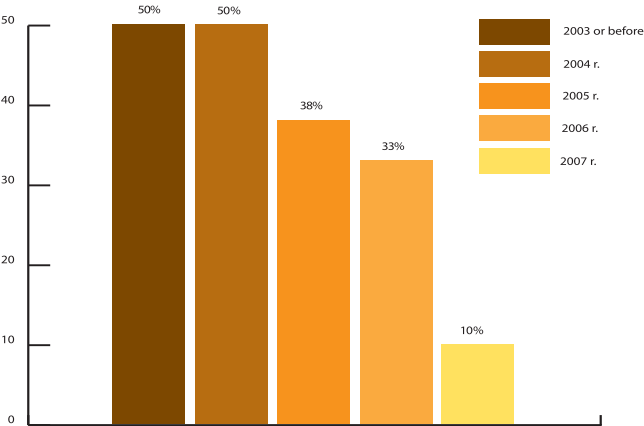
● HISTORY BEHIND BLOG RELATIONSHIPS

Social contacts of blog community go beyond the confines of the Internet. Quite frequently bloggers, readers or comment posters extend a relationship to the offline sphere. 37% of blog readers (including bloggers) at least once met another blogger, reader or comment poster in

person. As demonstrated in Diagram 3.3 this is related to blog-reading record. The earlier one started to read blogs the higher the probability of personal contact.

Diagram 3.3.

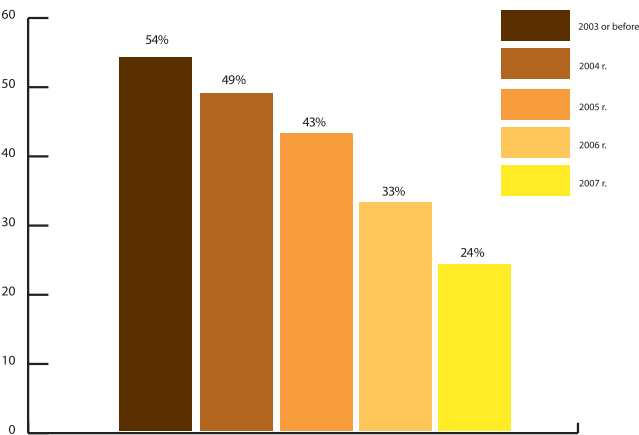
The year of starting as a blog reader in relation to whether one met a blog writer, reader or comment poster in person.
Basis: Individuals reading at least one blog, N=1743.



This interdependence is even stronger in the case of bloggers. The longer one blogs, the higher the probability of meeting another member of the blogosphere. Although this research does not provide enough data to determine the direction of dependence it can be supposed that it is bidirectional. On the one hand, long-time bloggers have more opportunities to establish relationships. On the other hand, meeting new persons online may be a stimulus to remain active and continue blogging.

Diagram 3.4.

The year of starting as a blogger in relation to whether one met another blog writer, reader or comment poster in person.
Basis: Individuals running at least one blog, N=1573.



Offline contacts seem to be connected with the popularity of particular blogs. Those who met another member of the blogosphere in person include as many as 62% of bloggers with a readership of 1000 and more, 46% of bloggers with 100-999 readers, 36% of bloggers with 10-99 readers and only 29% of bloggers with a readership of 1-9. More popular bloggers meet more frequently with other bloggers, as well as with readers and comment posters. The larger the readership, the higher the chance of seeing a reader in person.

Table 3.9.

Blog popularity in relation to whether the blogger met another blog writer, reader or comment poster in person.
Basis: Individuals running at least one blog and checking blog-visiting statistics, N=1129.

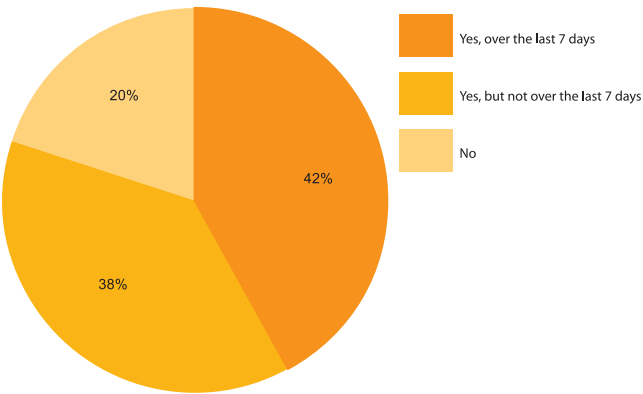
Reported number of readers	1-9	10-99	100-999	1000 and more	Total
% of bloggers who met (another blogger, etc.)	29%	36%	46%	62%	40%

BLOGGING OUTSIDE THE INTERNET

Blogging takes place offline as well. As shown in Diagram 3.5 the majority of the bloggers (80%) engaged in a personal conversation on their blog. Moreover, almost half of all the blog authors (38%) did it within 7 days before the survey. This suggests that blog-related conversations happen frequently and on a regular basis.

Diagram 3.5.

Did you talk about your blog with anybody outside the Internet?
Basis: Individuals running at least one blog, N=1573.



More popular authors have a higher chance of entering a personal conversation on blogging. As demonstrated in Table 3.10, out of all bloggers with a readership of 1000 and more 65% regularly talk about their blog in person. Also, the number of popular bloggers who have never entered this kind of conversation is little more than null.

Table 3.10.

Did you talk about your blog with anybody outside the Internet?
Basis: Individuals running at least one blog and checking blog-visiting statistics, N=1129.

Reported number of readers	1-9	10-99	100-999	1000 and more
Yes, over the last 7 days	17%	39%	57%	65%
Yes, but not over the last 7 days	54%	42%	37%	31%
No	29%	18%	6%	4%

In order to investigate the phenomenon of regular blog-related personal discussions in detail we applied logistic regression. As shown in Table 3.11, a higher conversation chance within 7 days before the survey occurs in the case of those bloggers who have a large readership, provide frequent blog updates and devote more time to blogging. Also, another important factor is the type of blog - here the most active groups were owners of blogs related to family or friends, bloggers writing to cultivate relationships (expectedly enough) and those whose motivations are interests and hobbies.

Table 3.11.**Factors behind the blogger's engaging in conversations on their blog outside the Internet within the week before the survey**

– **logistic regression model** (67% correctly classified, Nagelkerke's R² = 0,2, 2 = 195,976).

Basis: Individuals running at least one blog, N=1573.

Variables	B	S.E.	Wald	P	Exp(B)
Reported number of readers (category)	0,638	0,086	54,863	<0,001	0,528
Reason: cultivating relationships with friends and acquaintances	0,744	0,145	26,446	<0,001	0,475
Frequency of updates	-0,465	0,142	10,666	0,001	1,592
Hours devoted to blogging (weekly)	0,436	0,144	9,127	0,003	0,646
Reason: interests and hobbies	0,354	0,157	5,092	0,024	0,702
Content: topics related to family or friends	0,342	0,155	4,872	0,027	0,710

Interestingly enough, bloggers who discuss their blogs in person report a larger number of acquaintances (table 3.12). The number of relationships with relatives or friends is irrelevant in this context. A more detailed analysis of the size of social networks that bloggers belong to is analysed in more detail in the following section. It may be worth emphasizing that individuals who have several friends and acquaintances are more sociable and thus more likely to enter a conversation.

Table 3.12.**Engaging in blog-related conversations outside the Internet in relation to the number of persons the blogger meets or talks to at least a few times a year.**

Basis: Individuals running at least one blog, N=1573.

Blog-related conversation	Yes, over the last 7 days	Yes, but not over the last 7 days	No
Average number of acquaintances	51	39	35

●● BLOGGERS' FRIENDS AND RELATIVES

A general context of blog authors' and readers' social relations is crucial in the phenomenon of blogging. Writing or commenting a blog may be a means of establishing new contacts (and extend them beyond the Internet) but also may help to stay in touch with offline friends and acquaintances. The latter function can be of particular significance in the case of long-distance relationships when a friend moves or emigrates. In such instances, blog may be a convenient way of keeping friends and acquaintances updated. The hypothesis of a positive effect of blogging on interpersonal relations is corroborated by the latest American researches [15].

One of methods used in researches into social relations of individuals are questions relating to the size of social network. In our survey we included 4 questions taken from Diagnoza Społeczna 2005 (or Social Diagnosis 2005) [5]. We interrogated about an approximate number of persons an individual meets or talks to at least 3 times a year (divided into 3 categories: relatives, friends and acquaintances). We also asked how many of these persons live close (in the same city or within 10 km) to the surveyed individual. The differentiation between friends and acquaintances served to single out strong (close) and weak relationships.

As comments showed this question proved problematic and we had difficulty determining the size of networks, especially as far as acquaintances were concerned. This may have resulted from the fact that the question was asked at the end of the survey when the respondents were more tired. Nevertheless, after additional analyses of logical consistency of data and having rejected a small portion of answers we decided to use these findings. We are aware of the difficulty of providing an exact or even rough number of acquaintances one meets. However, research practice suggests that this

question is quite an accurate indicator of the actual size of the network of weak relations.

An analysis of the connection between various blogging-related phenomena and the size of social networks leads to interesting conclusions. First and foremost, it seems that heavy blogging is related to a larger number of acquaintances and to more frequent contacts with persons who live far off. On the other hand, it is irrelevant to the number of bloggers' relationships with relatives, and in rare cases pertains to the number of friends. This suggests that contacts in the blogosphere are chiefly weak relations and especially those involving distance. These results are hardly unexpected and agree with theories on the influence of Internet usage on interpersonal relations, as well as with the findings of Polish-wide Social Diagnosis research (Diagnoza Społeczna 2005 [1]).

● Comments from friends?

There can be seen an interesting interdependence between bloggers' relationship networks and the number of received comments. As shown in Table 3.13, bloggers who maintain relationships with several acquaintances (and thus may be called sociable persons) tend to receive more comments on average. There seems to exist no direct relation between the number of received comments and the number of relationships with relatives or friends, or the number of long-distance relationships. However, there is one interesting exception to this rule. Bloggers who report more than 20 comments have a significantly higher percentage of friends and long-distance relationships. Also, out of all groups they report the highest number of acquaintances. Whether they are exceptionally active and sociable persons remains a matter of supposition.

Table 3.13.**Bloggers' contact networks in relation to the number of comments received within the week before the survey.**

Basis: Bloggers who received at least one comment passed through additional data quality filters (N=980).

Number of comments within 7 days before the survey	Average number of relationships			
	Relatives	Friends	Acquaintances	Living farther than 10 km away
1	12,4	7,9	33,4	31,1
2	11,7	7,5	35,2	25,1
3	13,0	8,8	38,2	31,7
4 or 5	10,6	8,8	43,7	30,1
6 - 10	15,0	8,7	46,9	32,9
11 - 20	13,1	7,0	44,3	31,7
more than 20	13,9	12,1	53,6	41,4

Interesujący jest generalny brak wpływu częstotliwości wpisów na liczbę kontaktów, z wyjątkiem osób deklarujących najczęstsze wpisy (przynajmniej raz dziennie), które mają zdecydowanie najwięcej znajomych i nieco więcej przyjaciół (tabela 3.14).

Table 3.14.**Bloggers' contact networks in relation to the frequency of blog updates.**

Basis: Bloggers passed through additional data quality filters.

Frequency of updates	Average number of relationships		
	Relatives (N=1304)	Friends (N=1305)	Acquaintances (N=1295)
At least once a day	13,3	10,1	50,2
3-6 times a week	12,7	8,8	43,6
1-2 times a week	12,9	7,8	39,3
Less than once a week	12,3	8,8	44,5

As already mentioned, an ample portion of blog readers make their reading choices influenced partly by their friends' and acquaintances' suggestions. As shown in Table 3.15 they are more sociable individuals who have a larger number of long-distance relationships, relationships with acquaintances and, quite surprisingly, relatives.

Table 3.15.

Bloggers' contact networks in relation to visiting blogs recommended by friends and acquaintances.

Basis: Blog readers passed through additional data quality filters.

	Average number of relationships			
	Relatives (N=1439)	Friends (N=1438)	Acquaintances (N=1429)	Living farther than 10 km away (N=1454)
I visit blogs recommended by friends and acquaintances				
Strongly agree	14,8	9,1	50,5	35,7
Rather agree	13,6	8,1	44,8	32,9
Neither agree nor disagree	11,7	8,4	40,8	31,5
Rather disagree	10,2	8,4	39,1	29,3
Strongly disagree	12,1	8,4	36,7	28,3

BLOG AS IT SHOULD BE

Teresa Wierzbowska

●● WHAT IS A PROPER BLOG?

Bloggers write for different reasons and different purposes. However, regardless of its thematic character (occupation, private life, etc.) a blog should conform to some general blogosphere expectations. One of the goals of this research was to discover Web users' needs and notions with regard to blogs, their content and form - for blog appeal, credibility or the loyalty of readership are determined by a number of aspects. The results of this part of the research provide further grounds for the hypothesis of the changing role of blogs as sources of information and their status in the array of media and communication channels.

Blog quality was most important for active bloggers who read more than ten blogs, post comments on at least two and run up to three themselves. We called this group (comprising 58% of the respondents) heavy bloggers. Users who enter the blogosphere occasionally (light bloggers) were more diversified. The only aspect they rated higher than active bloggers was personal acquaintance with a blog author. 12% of light bloggers chose this factor as particularly important, compared to only 6% of heavy bloggers.

The surveyed were asked to rate the importance of particular blog aspects on a 5-point scale, with 5 being the top mark. The highest average rating was 4,02 and the lowest - 2,14.

●● BELIEVING BLOGS

As the blogosphere is becoming increasingly related to the sphere of professional activity the quality and reliability of blogs have been more and more valued. Credibility was in fact the top-rated aspect, with an overall

rating higher than 4 and the best score among active blogosphere users - more than half of heavy bloggers chose this aspect as particularly important.

Let us refer here to the recurring questions whether "blogger" equals "journalist" and whether blog deserves the name of communication medium. The results show that 39% of active bloggers perceive a number of blog authors as journalists and 20% of occasional blogosphere users share this view. Although blogs are not generally held as credible sources (only 1/6 of the surveyed reported otherwise) as many as 48% of heavy bloggers reported reading blogs they believe. This data along with opinions voiced across the world of journalism proves that blogs, once ignored by the media, are now treated as valuable sources of content. This is a change that has been happening throughout the recent two or three years when the blogosphere experienced a dynamic growth. Hesitant to trust blogs, journalists used to quote them as "undefined sources." The results of an Arketi Group research show that currently 67% of journalist openly admit referring to blogs. Similar sources demonstrate that 80% actually treat blogs as credible sources. The dwindling distance between the blogosphere and the media is undoubtedly connected with the fact that several media outlets, including some of the major opinion-setters, have opened blogsites that contain articles and journalists' comments. These blogs form an additional communication channel or a sphere to accommodate discussions on topics featured in paper issues.

What makes a blog credible? Aside from blogrolls (see previous chapters of this report) - which constitute an important credibility factor for the readers of blogs involved - what counts is the structure and content of entries. The perceived evidence of blog credibility are: links to sources placed in the content of entries (the view of 61% of heavy bloggers) and the availability of content that cannot be found elsewhere (41% of heavy bloggers). That said, readers expect bloggers to express their clearly subjective opinions. This simultaneous need of credibility and subjectivism is a unique aspect of the blogosphere. Rather than expect purely informational functions, readers demand original blogging style and a general thematic profile. This is corroborated by the fact that monothematic character of blogs is not the main focus of blog readers - this aspect received a very low importance rating of 2,66 (on a 5-point scale).

●● THE DYNAMICS OF BLOGS

The second most valued aspect of blogs are frequent updates (on average rated 3,79 on a 5-point scale). This preference was voiced also by those who provided comments outside the multiple choice answers. In the "other aspects" category frequent updates were rated as high as 4,30 and were slightly more important to daily Internet users than to other groups. It can be supposed that these users have similar expectations towards blogs as with respect to news services - up-to-date and fresh content are incentives to visit a particular blog.

Traditional aspects of mass media, like dynamic transmission of content, use of multimedia, and high popularity, are less significant in the case of blogs. To be true, 31% of the surveyed bloggers reported using multimedia functionalities on their blogs yet this was not a key aspect for blog readers. Multimedia were rated 2,64 on average (on a 5-point scale) and blog popularity was chosen as the least important factor.

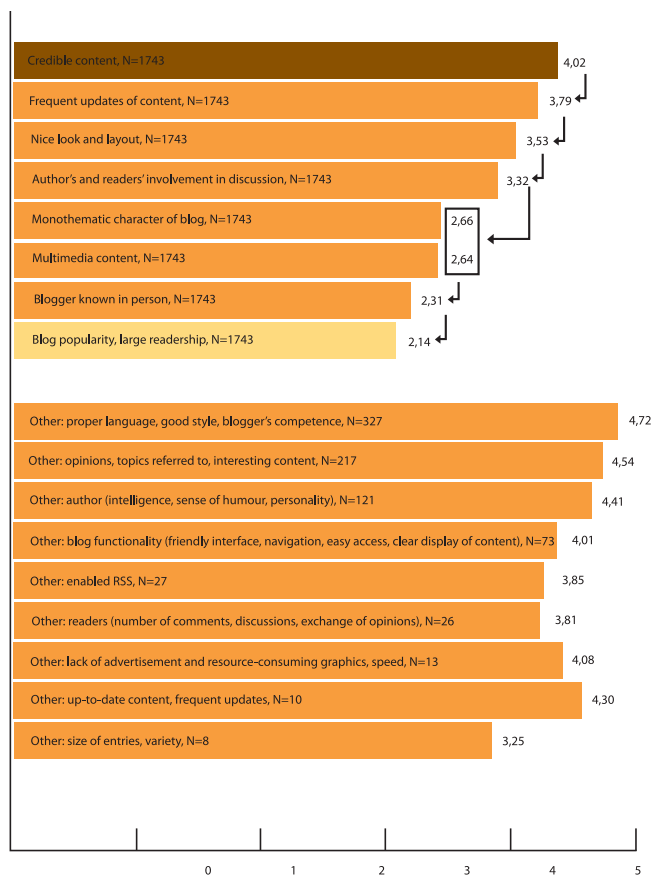
Social relations within the blogosphere are discussed in detail in previous sections of our report, let us only mention here that the surveyed assigned very little significance to knowing a blogger in person as a blog value criterion. This aspect was rated penultimate. Thus, the blogosphere favours interesting personalities regardless of whether they are known by readers in the real life. "Acquaintance" assumes a completely new meaning in this context.

The surveyed were presented with sets of multiple choice questions but they could provide feedback outside this frame as well. Thus, other indicated factors, related to blogging and bloggers themselves, were: proper language, good style, competence in what a blogger writes on, opinions, topics referred to, interesting content, intelligence, sense of humour, personality. Also, the surveyed mentioned the question of blog functionality: friendly interface, navigation, easy access, clear display of content, enabled RSS, lack of advertisement and resource-consuming graphics, speed. Slightly less significant were blog popularity and reader activity manifested in the number of comments and discussions. Thus, feedback provided in the "other aspects" field confirms that the form and creative content of a blog are deemed more important than its popularity.

Wykres 4.1.

What are your expectations towards blogs?

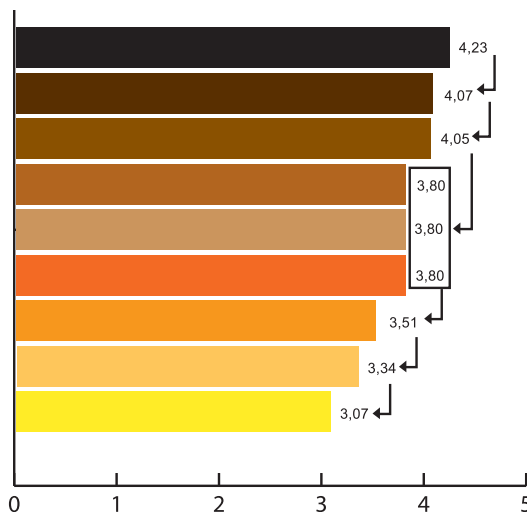
Basis: all the surveyed, N=1835.



Wykres 4.2.

How much do you agree with the following statements?

Basis: all the surveyed, N=1835



- Advertisement featured on blogs is annoying. N=1698
- I appreciate bloggers who provide links to sources and information they quote and refer to. N=1667
- My favourite blogs are those that feature the author's subjective opinions. N=1670
- There are blogs I perceive as credible sources of information. N=1562
- I perceive some bloggers as journalists. N=1545
- Blogs can feature content that cannot be found elsewhere. N=1638
- Readers of a particular blog tend to have something in common. N=1587
- I visit blogs recommended by my friends and acquaintances. N=1670
- Blog content is generally credible. N=1487

What is the right blog? "Safety valve" (as called by some) or occupation-related tool, blog reveals its value in its unique character created by its author and readers. The research proves that the readership's trust is won through frequent updates of credible content spiced with subjective opinions rather than eye-catching form and multimedia. ■

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THE RESEARCH

●● **GEMIUS SA** – research company, leader and pioneer in the field of Internet research in Central-Eastern Europe. Present in Poland since 1999, provides professional research solutions as well as analytical and consulting services for all entities. The company offers a wide array of comprehensive researches into several fields, like Web users' behaviour on websites (gemiusTraffic), Web users' socio-demographic profile (gemiusProfile) or the efficiency of Internet advertisement campaigns (gemiusEffect). In cooperation with Polskie Badania Internetu, Gemius has been conducting a comprehensive research of viewing rates of Internet sites and applications - Megapanel PBI/Gemius.

●● **BLOX.PL** – one of the biggest community services offering free blogging space. Established in 2004. Its key advantage are topic-oriented blogs and a unique community. The best bloggers are offered advertising space. Since 2007 Blox.pl has been following a strategy of promoting blogs as sources of valuable content and professional knowledge. Also, the service has been conducting researches into Polish blogosphere.

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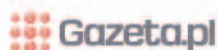
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Modern entertainment portal

1) 6 092 329 real users in Poland in October 2007 is + 28% in comparison to October 2006* 2) category: *Jobs* (1 509 774 real users in Poland in October 2007)* 3) GazetaDom.pl is the leader of category: *Real estate* (895 700 real users in Poland in October 2007)*; this year GazetaDom.pl was also awarded Webstarfestival 2007 in category *Home and Garden* 4) Wiadomosci.Gazeta.pl was awarded Webstarfestival 2007 in category *News* and is the 3rd news site in Poland in category *News, Opinion, Media* (3 022 349 real users in Poland in October 2007)* 5) category: *Business, Finance, Law* (984 372 real users in Poland in October 2007)* 6) the 4th site in category *Lifestyle* (2 497 672 real users in Poland in October 2007)* 7) 664 006 real users in Poland in October 2007* 8) 2 783 332 real users in Poland in October 2007 (source: Press on the internet authorised by Gemius SA); site GazetaWyborcza.pl is also the laureate of Webstarfestival 2007 in category *Media* 9) 797 523 real users in Poland in October 2007* 10) 797 523 real users in Poland in October 2007* 11) category: *Sport* (1 006 357 real users in Poland in October 2007)*; this year Sport.pl was also awarded Webstarfestival 2007 in category *Sport*.

*Source of data: Megapanel PBI/Gemius, October 2007.

